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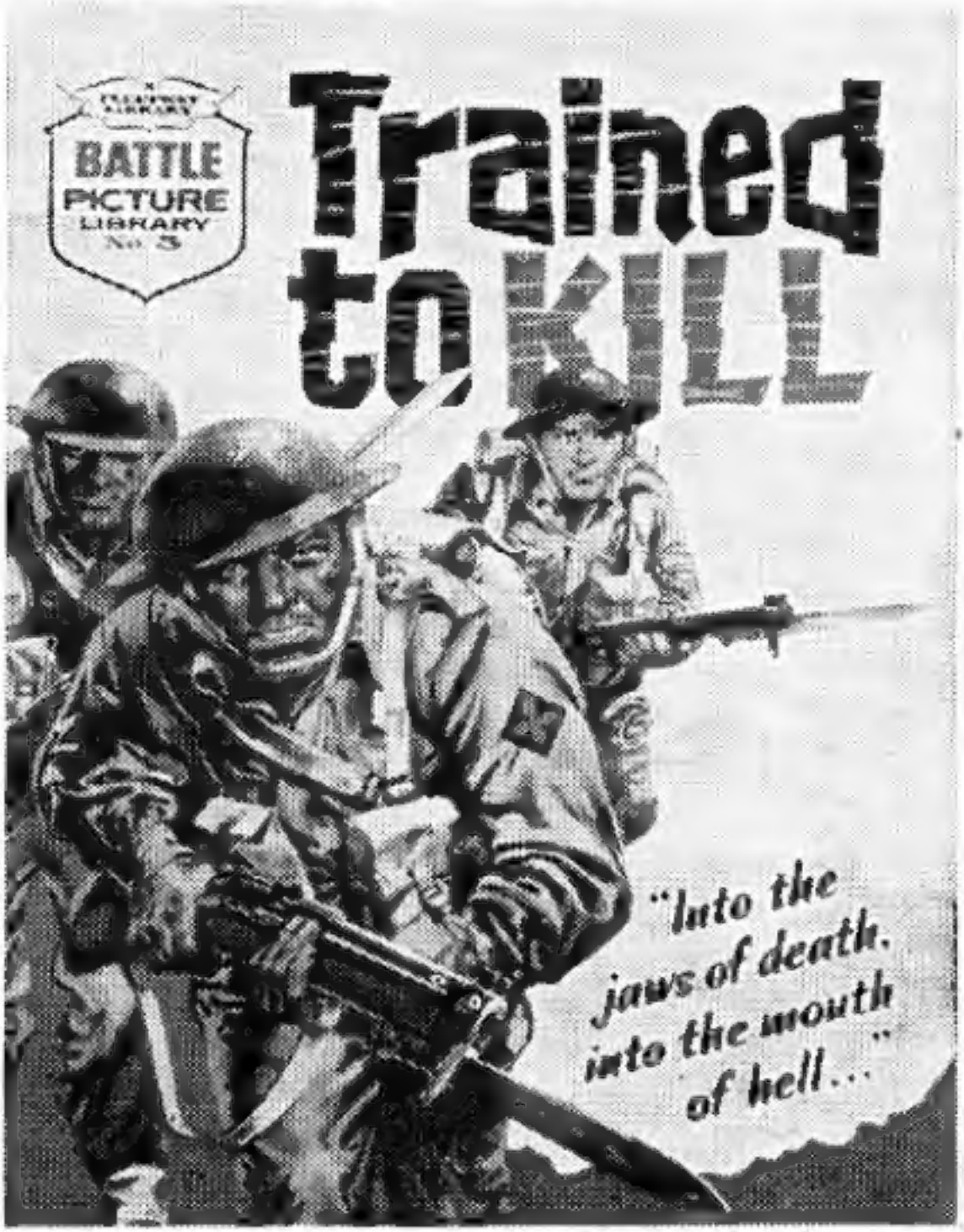

TWO Dramatic, All-action Issues Every Month

Colours Flying

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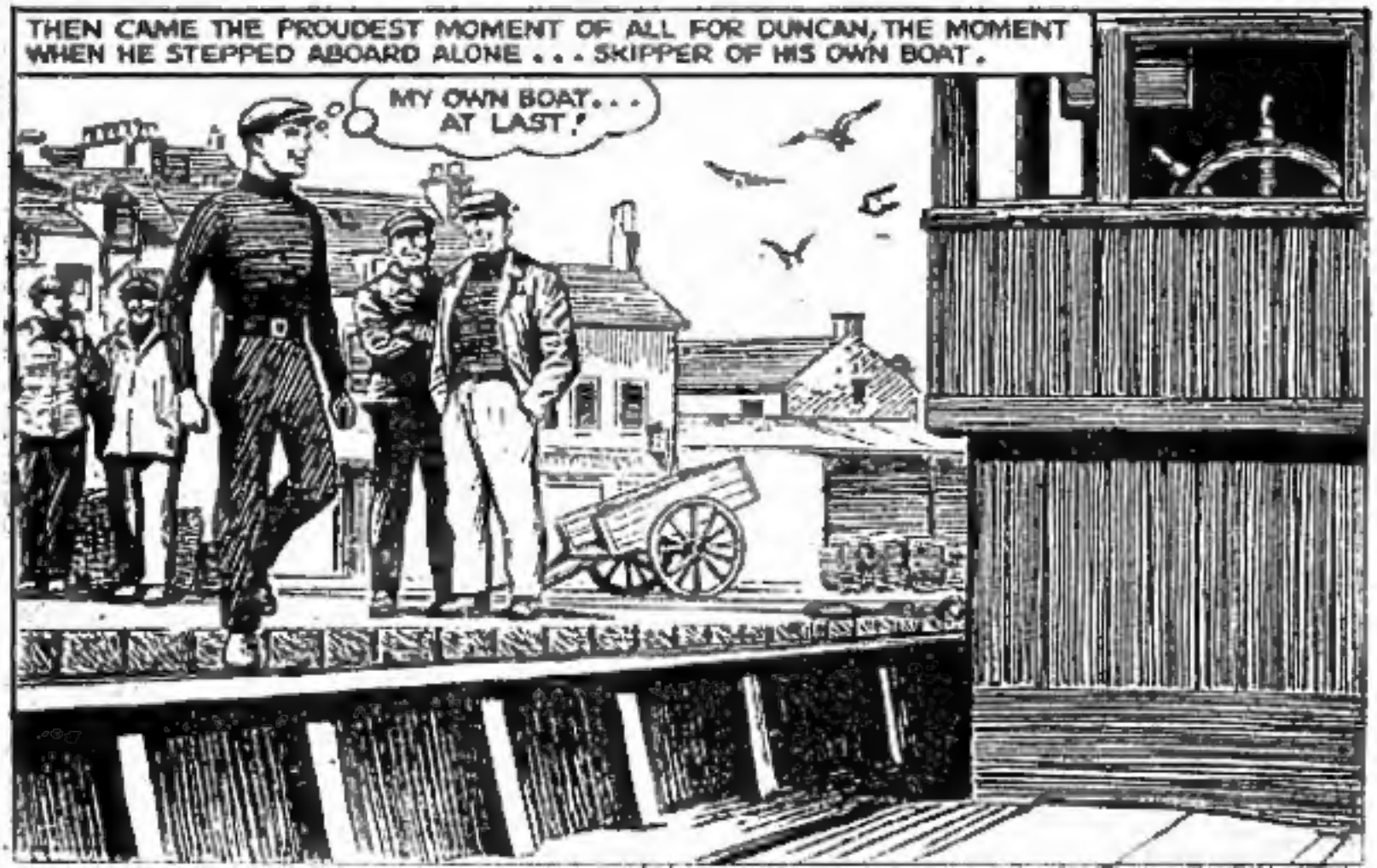
Chapter 1. HIGHLAND QUEEN

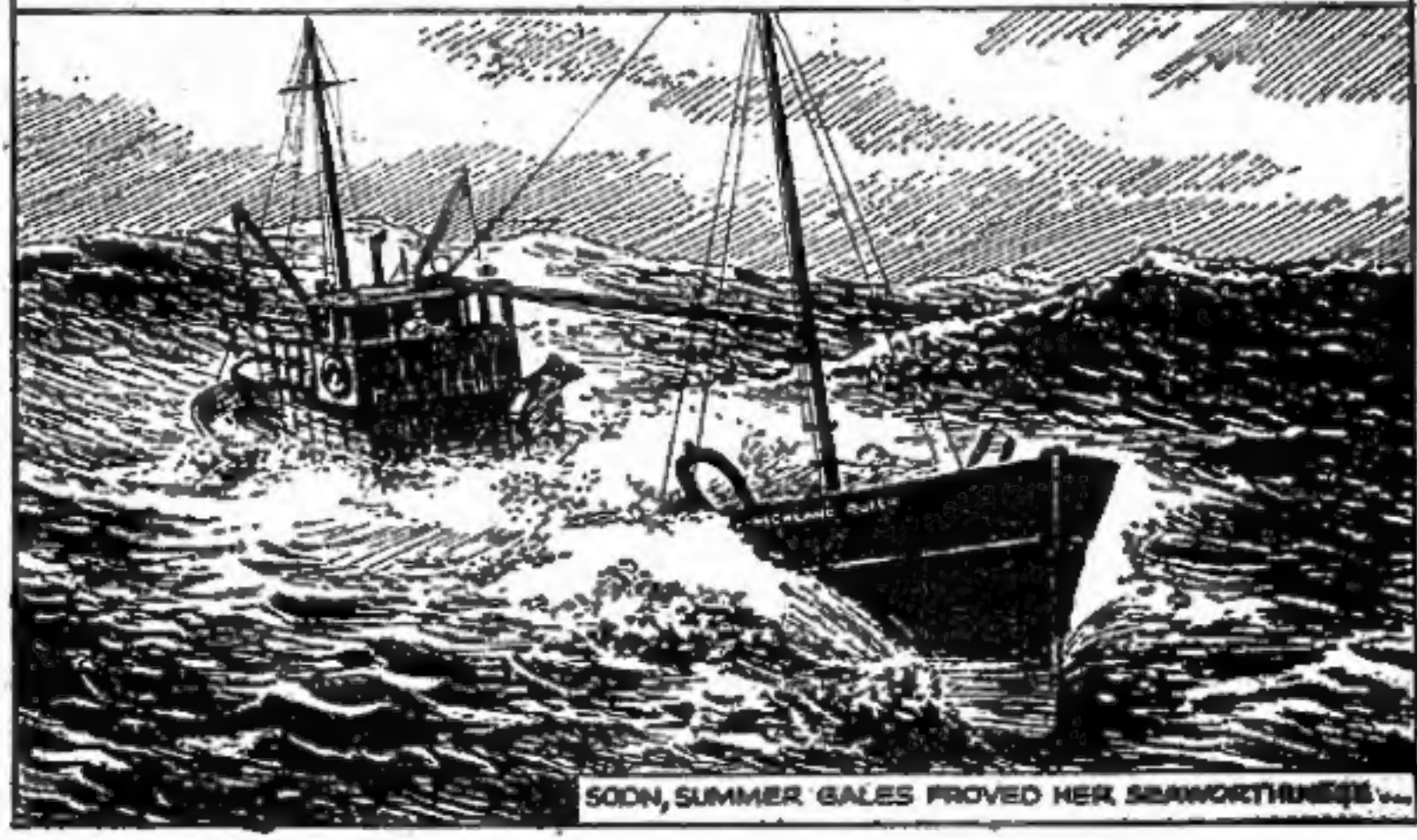
THOUGH THE CLOUDS OF WAR MIGHT HANG OVER THE WORLD, THERE WAS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT IN THE SCOTTISH FISHING VILLAGE OF INCHNESS THAN A LAUNCHING. TO YOUNG DUNCAN MACLEOD, IT WAS THE GREATEST DAY OF HIS LIFE, THE DAY WHEN THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* TOOK THE WATER.

THEN CAME THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF ALL FOR DUNCAN, THE MOMENT WHEN HE STEPPED ABOARD ALONE . . . SKIPPER OF HIS OWN BOAT.



HE ENTERED THE WHEELHOUSE AND TOOK THE SPOKES IN HIS GRASP. HE EYED THE STURDY, HONEST LINES OF A BOAT THAT WOULD NEVER GIVE BEST TO ANY SEA — AND THERE HE MADE A PROMISE . . .

TWO DAYS LATER, DUNCAN AND THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WERE AT SEA AND FISHING. THE NEW BOAT HAD TO EARN HER PRICE — FOR THE WHOLE MACLEOD FAMILY HAD GONE DEEPLY INTO DEBT TO BUY HER. SHE WAS THEIR LIFE SAVINGS.



SOON, SUMMER GALES PROVED HER SEAWORTHINESS...

AND DUNCAN PROVED HIS SKILL AS A SKIPPER . . .

WE'RE DOING GRAND, LADS, IF THE MARKETS HOLD GOOD.

LIKE A HORSE AND ITS RIDER, THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* AND DUNCAN SEEMED TO DEVELOP A SORT OF AFFINITY. HE COULD TRUST HER ANYWHERE, EVEN IN FOG.

DINNA FASH YERSELF, LADDIE, THE *QUEEN* WILL FIND HER WAY ALL RIGHT.

THE *QUEEN* OR DUNCAN— OR ARE THEY THE SAME THING?

HIGHLAND QUEEN

NOT ALL THE INCHNESS FISHERMEN HAD THE SAME FEELING FOR THEIR CRAFT. SOME WERE HAM-HANDED, LIKE KARL ERICSEN, A NORWEGIAN WHO HAD MADE HIS HOME IN THE LITTLE PORT.

WHY CAN'T YOU WATCH WHAT YOU'RE AT, YOU . . . YOU BOAT- BUTCHER.

VOT YOU GOT THEN? FISHING BOAT OR A FINE YACHT, EH?

PD91

FISHING WAS GOOD IN THOSE SUMMER MONTHS OF 1939. PRICES WERE GOOD, TOO — WHICH WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT. TO A FISHERMAN THAT WAS ALL THE NEWS HE CARED ABOUT. THEN ONE DAY AS THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WAS HOMEWARD BOUND WITH A GOOD HAUL...

A COUPLE OF YEARS LIKE THIS AND THE *QUEEN* WILL HAVE PAID FOR HERSELF.

HEY, SKIPPER, THE NORWEGIAN'S COMING UP ASTERN — SEEMS TO WANT TO COME ALONGSIDE.

DUNCAN'S FIRST IMPULSE WAS TO OPEN THE THROTTLE AND LEAVE THE OTHER BOAT FAR ASTERN — AS HE COULD EASILY HAVE DONE. BUT IT COULD BE IMPORTANT. IF ERICSEN WAS IN TROUBLE, DUNCAN MUST STAND BY HIM.

WATCH HOW YOU COME, ERICSEN!

NEWS... I GOT NEWS...

HIGHLAND QUEEN

PD993

THE COLLISION THAT FOLLOWED WAS ONLY A GLANCING ONE — BUT IT BROUGHT DUNCAN OUT ON DECK IN A FURY LEST THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* HAD BEEN DAMAGED.

THE CLUMSY OAF... THAT BIT WILL HAVE TO BE PAINTED AS SOON AS WE GET IN.

HEY, SKIPPER! LOOK AT THIS!

WHAT DUNCAN SAW IN THE NEWSPAPER BANISHED ALL THOUGHTS OF THE DAMAGE TO HIS BOAT....

Inchness Gaz...
3rd September 1939

WAR DECLARED ON GERMANY

Warsaw B... By Hitler's...

BACK IN INCHNESS, THE WHOLE CREW HEADED FOR THE NAVAL RECRUITING OFFICE — WHICH WAS ALREADY BESIEGED BY FISHERMEN, MANY OF THEM RESERVISTS.

YON HITLER'S GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME.

ROYAL NAVY

DUNCAN WENT WITH THE OTHERS — BUT AS HE NEARED THE OFFICE HE PAUSED. IF HE JOINED UP NOW, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN*... AND TO HIS FAMILY?

DAD'S PAST SKIPPERING A BOAT NOW WITH HIS BAD EYES — AND THERE'S NO ONE ELSE...

NOR COULD DUNCAN FORGET THE VOW HE HAD MADE WHEN HE FIRST TOOK OVER THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN*. THAT EVENING, IN THE PARLOUR OF THEIR HOUSE...

IT'S ONLY NATURAL YOU'D BE ITCHING TO GET TO THE WAR AND IF YOU FEEL IT'S YOUR DUTY, WE'LL NOT BE BLAMING YOU. LIKE ENOUGH WE COULD HIRE A SKIPPER FOR THE *QUEEN*.

A HIRED SKIPPER FOR THE *QUEEN*? NEVER!

THERE WAS ONLY ONE ANSWER, IT SEEMED. DUNCAN MUST STAY WITH THE BOAT. IT WAS A BITTER DECISION TO MAKE WITH ALL HIS FRIENDS JOINING UP. THERE WERE THOSE WHO SAW OTHER REASONS BEHIND IT.

DRINKS VOR EVERY MAN IN THE BAR... THAT IS, VOR MEN VOT IS MEN AND NOT FRIGHTENED VOR TO JOIN THEIR COUNTRY'S NAVY.

AND HOW DID YOU GET IN, I'D LIKE TO KNOW... AND WANGLE THAT KILLICK ON YOUR SLEEVE SO SMARTLY.

DUNCAN'S MIND WAS A TORTURED WHIRL AS HE SPUN AWAY FROM ERICSEN WITHOUT ANSWERING HIS TAUNTS AND RUSHED OUT INTO THE COOL NIGHT AIR. FOR THE DREADFUL THOUGHT HAD COME TO HIM THAT MAYBE ERICSEN WAS RIGHT—MAYBE HE REALLY WAS A COWARD.

AM I JUST MAKING THE *QUEEN* AN EXCUSE TO STAY OUT OF THE FIGHTING ?

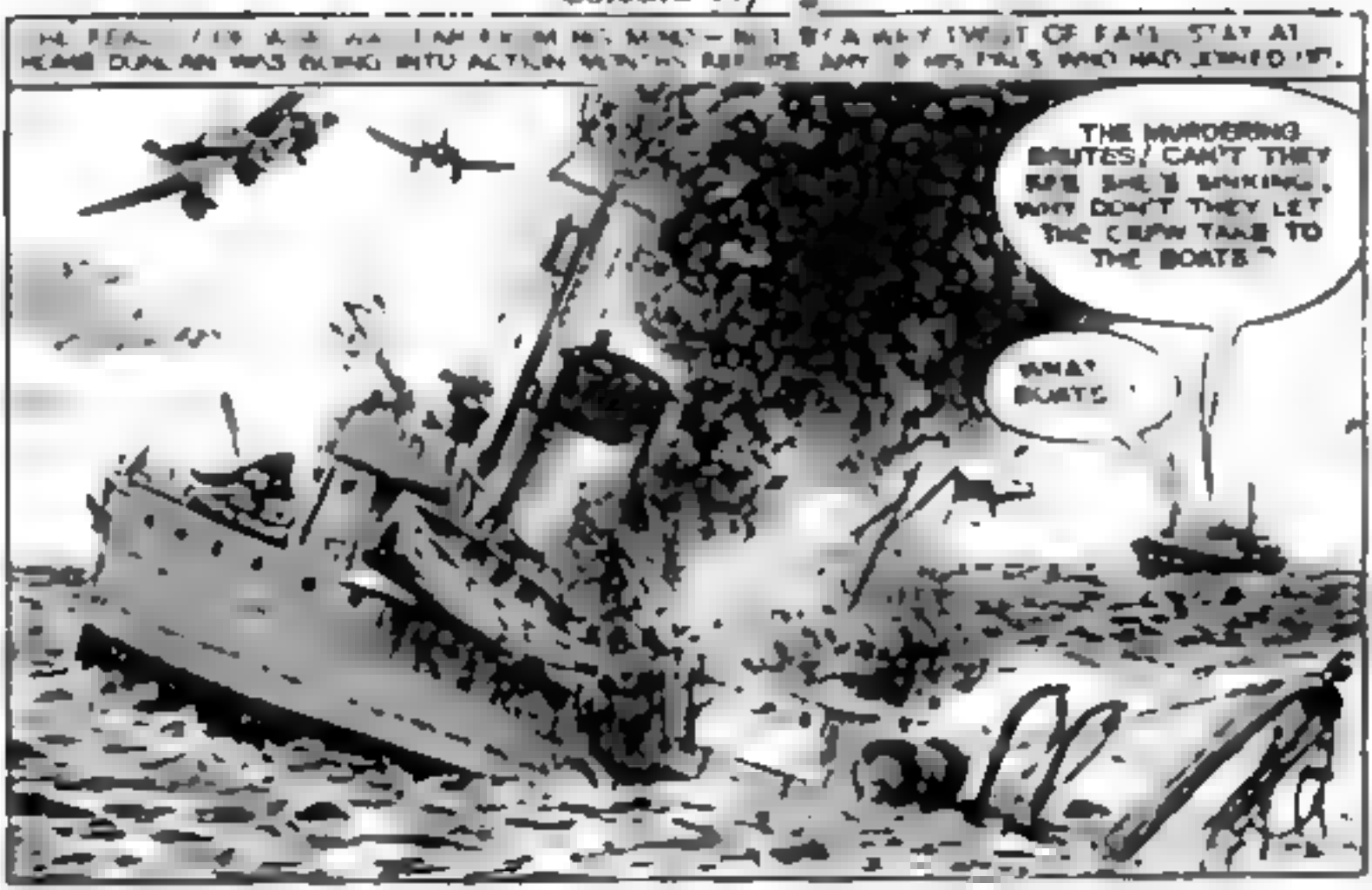
HIGHLAND QUEEN

PD993

IT WAS A QUESTION HE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO BEGIN TO ANSWER... BUT MEANWHILE, THERE WERE FISH TO BE CAUGHT...

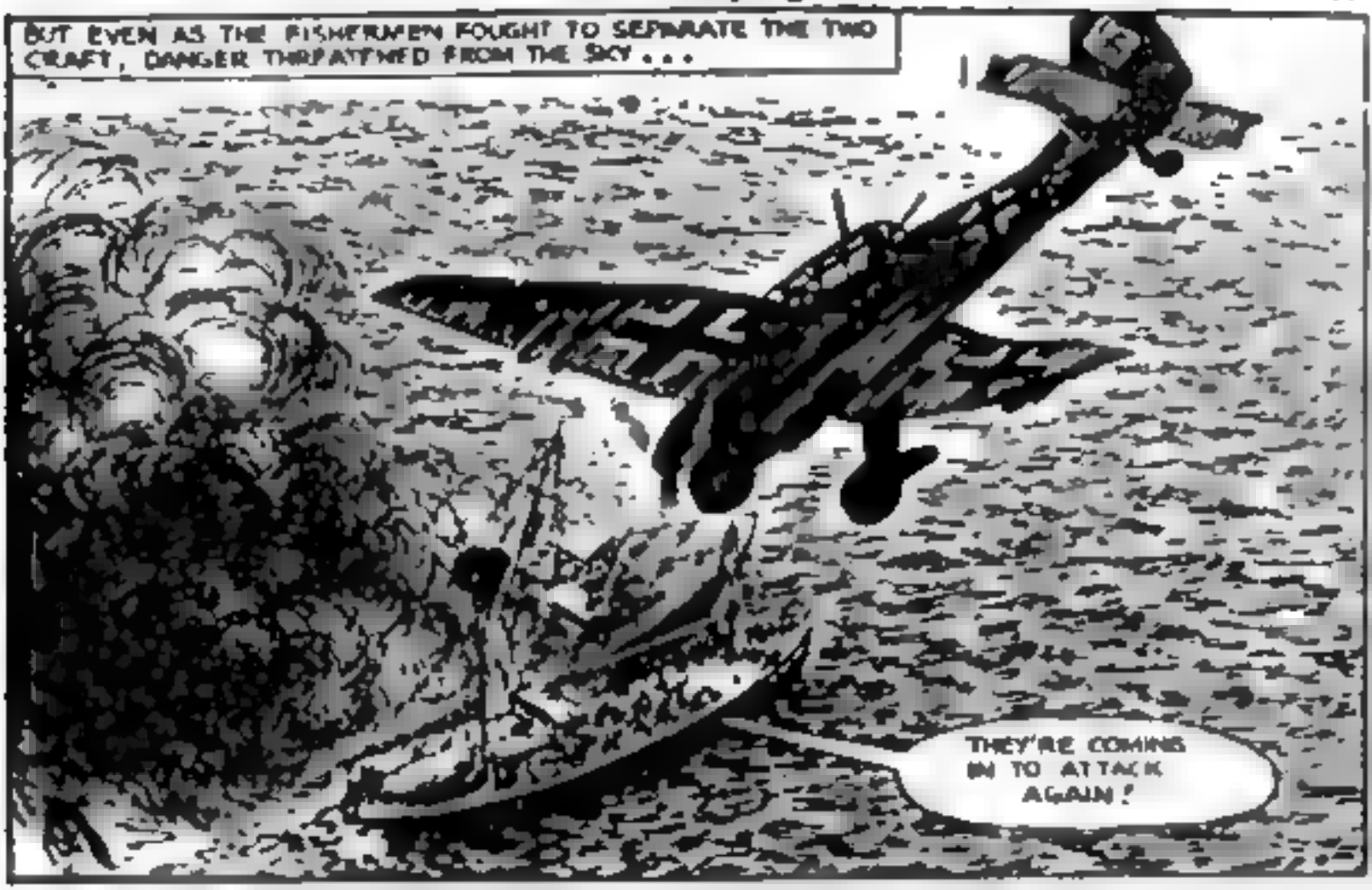
THERE'S SMOKE RISING OFF TO STARBOARD.

SOMEONE IN TROUBLE, MAYBE. WE'LL TAKE A LOOK.


THE MURDERING BRUTES! CAN'T THEY SEE SHE'S SINKING. WHY DON'T THEY LET THE CREW TAKE TO THE BOATS?
WHAT BOATS?

THANKS . . . BUT . . . MAN IN . . . ENGINE . . . ROOM . . .

THE ENGINE ROOM HAD BECOME A RAGING INFERNO . . .
HE'S STILL ALIVE . . . HE MOVED . . .
WITH ACRID FUMES CHOKING HIM, IT TOOK ALL DUNCAN'S STRENGTH TO HOIST THE ENGINEER TO HIS SHOULDERS AND FIGHT HIS WAY BACK UP THE LADDER TO SAFETY.
AIR AT LAST . . . THE QUEEN'S ON FIRE!
THE THREAT TO THE ANGEL AND QUEEN SEEMED TO BRING NEW STRENGTH TO DUNCAN AND THE MOMENT HE HAD TRANSFERRED THE INJURED MAN TO HIS OWN BOAT, HE FLUNG ALL HIS ENERGIES INTO FIGHTING THE FIRE.
CAST OFF . . . OUR ONLY HOPE'S TO GET AWAY FROM THE SWEEPER!


BUT EVEN AS THE FISHERMEN FOUGHT TO SEPARATE THE TWO CRAFT, DANGER THREATENED FROM THE SKY . . .
THEY'RE COMING IN TO ATTACK AGAIN!

BAFFLED FURY RAGED IN DUNCAN'S HEART. THE [redacted] QUEEN WAS THREATENED AND HE COULD NOT EVEN HIT BACK . . OR COULD HE?
SKIPPER . . . COME BACK! YOU'LL BE KILLED!

DUNCAN FOUGHT HIS WAY THROUGH THE SMOKE AND FLAMES TO THE MINESWEEPER'S BRIDGE — AND THE LEWIS GUN POSITION.
IF I CAN ONLY GET IT OFF AND BACK TO THE QUEEN . . .

SUDDENLY THE MOUNTING CAME FREE. DUNCAN SNATCHED UP A BOX OF AMMUNITION AND, WITH THE GUN, WENT RACING BACK TO THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN*.

CUT THOSE ROPES AWAY... SHE'S SINKING! FULL AHEAD ON THE ENGINE.

AS THE LINES PARTED AND THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* SWUNG AWAY FROM THE SINKING MINESWEEPER, THE NAZI DIVE BOMBER RETURNED TO THE ATTACK. BUT THIS TIME IT WAS NOT AGAINST A COMPLETELY DEFENCELESS BOAT...

SHOOT UP THE *QUEEN*, EH? BOMB THE *QUEEN*, EH? BURN HER, EH? WELL, HERE'S SOMETHING FOR YOU!

THE ROAR OF THE STUKA'S ENGINE ROSE TO AN EAR-SPLITTING CRESCENDO AND ITS VAST SHADOW BLOTTED OUT THE SKY AS IT SWOOPED OVERHEAD AT MAST HEIGHT.

AFTERWARDS, DUNCAN WAS NEVER QUITE SURE WHETHER THE GERMANS HAD RUN OUT OF AMMUNITION OR IF IT WAS HIS HIRE WHICH HAD DRIVEN THEM OFF... BUT HIS CREW HAD NO SUCH DOUBTS.

YE GOT HIM, DUNCAN, YE GOT THE MURDERING DEMON. LOSH, IT WAS PRETTY SHOOTING. I COULD SEE THE BULLETS GOING INTO HIM!

DUNCAN COULD FEEL NO ELATION. ASTERN, THE MINESWEEPER WAS ALMOST GONE. THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WAS HOLED LIKE A PEPPER BOX. DEAD AND DYING LAY ON HER BLOOD-STAINED, SMOKE-BLACKENED DECKS.

HERE, LET ME HELP YOU, LADDIE!

SO THIS IS WAR... IT'S MORE LIKE MURDER!

THIS ONE'S IN A BAD WAY!

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN LANDED HER TRAGIC CARGO AT INCHNESS. REPAIRS AND CLEANING UP BEGAN.
WILL I TELL THE NAVY TO COLLECT THEIR GUN?
STOW IT BELOW, WE'LL MAYBE NEED IT AGAIN!

BUT THERE WERE NO MORE RAIDS AND THE GUN LAY FORGOTTEN BENEATH THE CABIN FLOOR. IT WAS ALMOST AS IF PEACE HAD RETURNED FOR THIS WAS THE TIME OF THE "PHONEY WAR"...
THERE IS ONE [redacted]ING ABOUT THE WAR — FEWER BOATS MEAN MORE FISH [redacted] PRICES.
THERE IS NO GOOD THING ABOUT THE WAR.

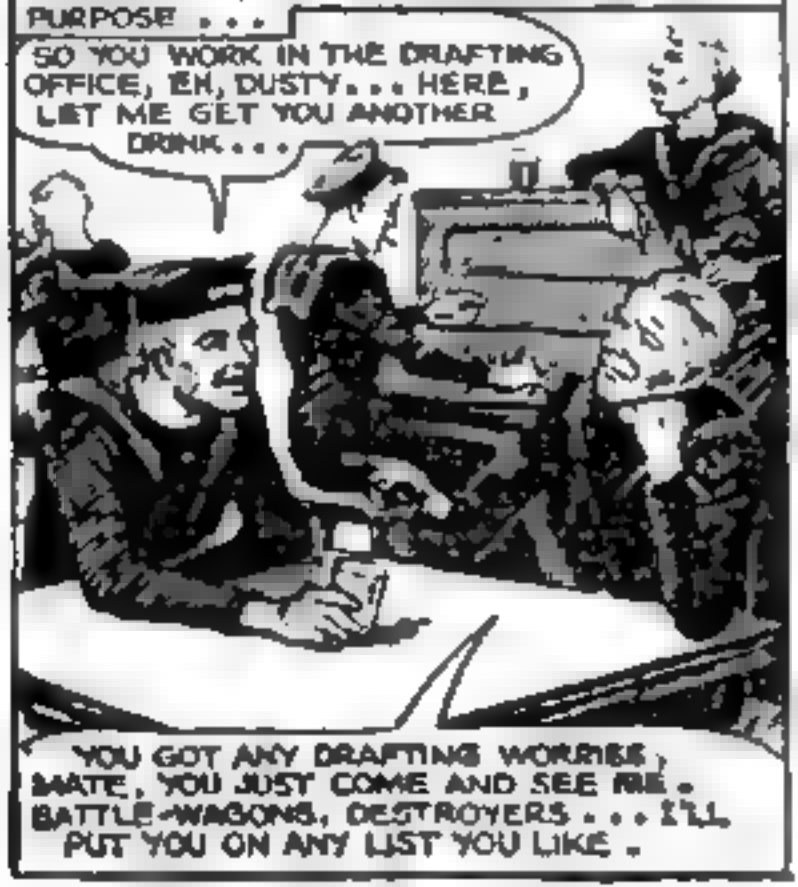
BUT THEN THERE HAPPENED SOMETHING THAT DUNCAN HAD NEVER EVEN IMAGINED.
SKIPPER MACLEOD? I'M MAKING A REQUISITION ORDER FOR THIS VESSEL.
A-A REQUISITION ORDER? YOU'RE TAKING HER FROM ME?

IN DUNCAN'S HEART THERE WAS A COLD NUMBNESS AS IF HE COULD NOT TAKE IN THE NAVAL OFFICER'S WORDS. AFTER ALL, HE WAS TO LOSE THE HIGHLAND QUEEN... NOT TO THE HUNGRY SEA, NOT TO THE GERMANS BUT TO THE ROYAL NAVY.
SHE'S IN THE NAVY NOW... BUT DON'T WORRY. YOU'LL BE PAID FULL COMPENSATION.
PAID!
HOW COULD THEY PAY? DID THEY NOT KNOW THAT THERE WAS NO MONEY MINTED THAT COULD PAY FOR THE HIGHLAND QUEEN? IT WAS THE DARKEST HOUR OF DUNCAN'S LIFE..

Chapter 2. BOAT-BUTCHER

THERE WAS NOTHING TO KEEP DUNCAN FROM JOINING UP. INDEED, THERE WAS EVERY REASON FOR HIM TO ENLIST. ONLY IN THE NAVY COULD HE HOPE TO SEE THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* AGAIN. ONLY IN THE NAVY COULD HE KEEP THE PROMISE HE HAD MADE.

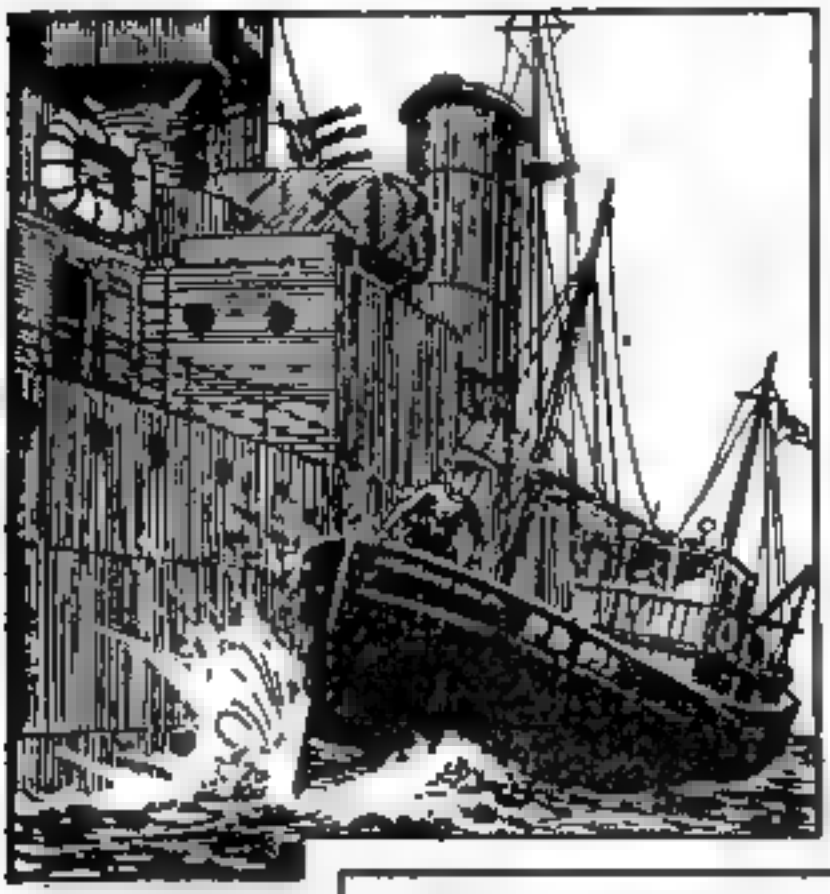
HIS FIRST WEEKS IN THE NAVY WERE A BEWILDERING NIGHTMARE TO THE YOUNG FISHERMAN. EVERYONE SEEMED IN A HURRY. EVERYONE SEEMED TO BE BARKING ORDERS... BUT HE REMEMBERED HIS PURPOSE...



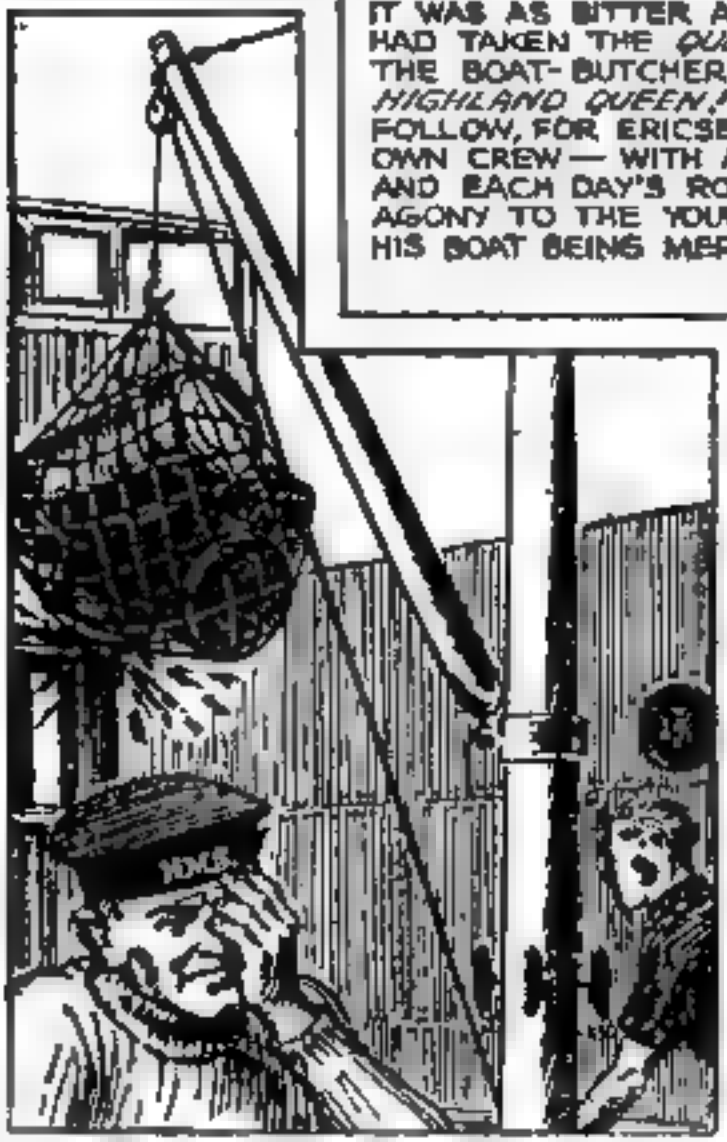
AND SO, THROUGH DUSTY MILLER, DUNCAN FOUND WHERE THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* HAD BEEN SENT... AND GOT HIMSELF DRAFTED TO THE SAME FLEET SUPPLY FLOTILLA AT BARNET'S BAY.

BUT WHEN HE SAW THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* AGAIN, IT WAS NOT JOY THAT FILLED DUNCAN MACLEOD.
LOSH... WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?

WHAT SORT OF TREATMENT HAD HIS BOAT BEEN GETTING TO BE IN THIS SHAPE ALREADY. FURY BURNING IN HIS HEART, DUNCAN SPRANG ABOARD TO MAKE A CLOSER INSPECTION. THEN HE HEARD A FAMILIAR VOICE — AND HE KNEW THE CAUSE OF THE *QUEEN'S* STATE . . .
ACH, SO! OLD VRIENDS MEET AGAIN! VELCOME ABOARD MY SHIP.
YOU IN CHARGE OF THE QUEEN! NO WONDER SHE'S ALMOST WRECKED!



IT WAS AS BITTER A MOMENT AS WHEN THEY HAD TAKEN THE *QUEEN* FROM DUNCAN. THE BOAT-BUTCHER IN CHARGE OF THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN!* BUT WORSE WAS TO FOLLOW, FOR ERICSEN GOT DUNCAN INTO H.S OWN CREW — WITH A REFINEMENT OF CRUELTY— AND EACH DAY'S ROUND OF DUTIES WAS AN AGONY TO THE YOUNG SKIPPER AS HE SAW HIS BOAT BEING MERCILESSLY ILL-USED.



BITTERNESS GNAWED AT DUNCAN'S HEART BUT, THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO . . . EXCEPT SOMETIMES AT NIGHT —

AT LEAST I CAN TOUCH HER UP A BIT WHEN NO ONE'S ABOUT.

YET EVEN THIS CAUSED MORE FRUSTRATION FOR THE YOUNG SAILOR.

I MUST SAY YOU KEEP THIS BOAT IN GOOD SHAPE, ERICSEN.

DANK YOU, SIR.

HE KNOCKS ABOUT, I PATCH . . . AND HE GETS THE CREDIT.

THEN, ONE MOONLIT NIGHT AS DUNCAN DID HIS BEST TO REPAIR THE RAVAGES THAT ERICSEN HAD WREAKED DURING THE DAY, HE DROPPED HIS PAINTBRUSH. AS HE BENT TO GRAB AT IT HE SAW AN ENORMOUS SHADOW MOVING IN THE WATER BENEATH HIM . . .

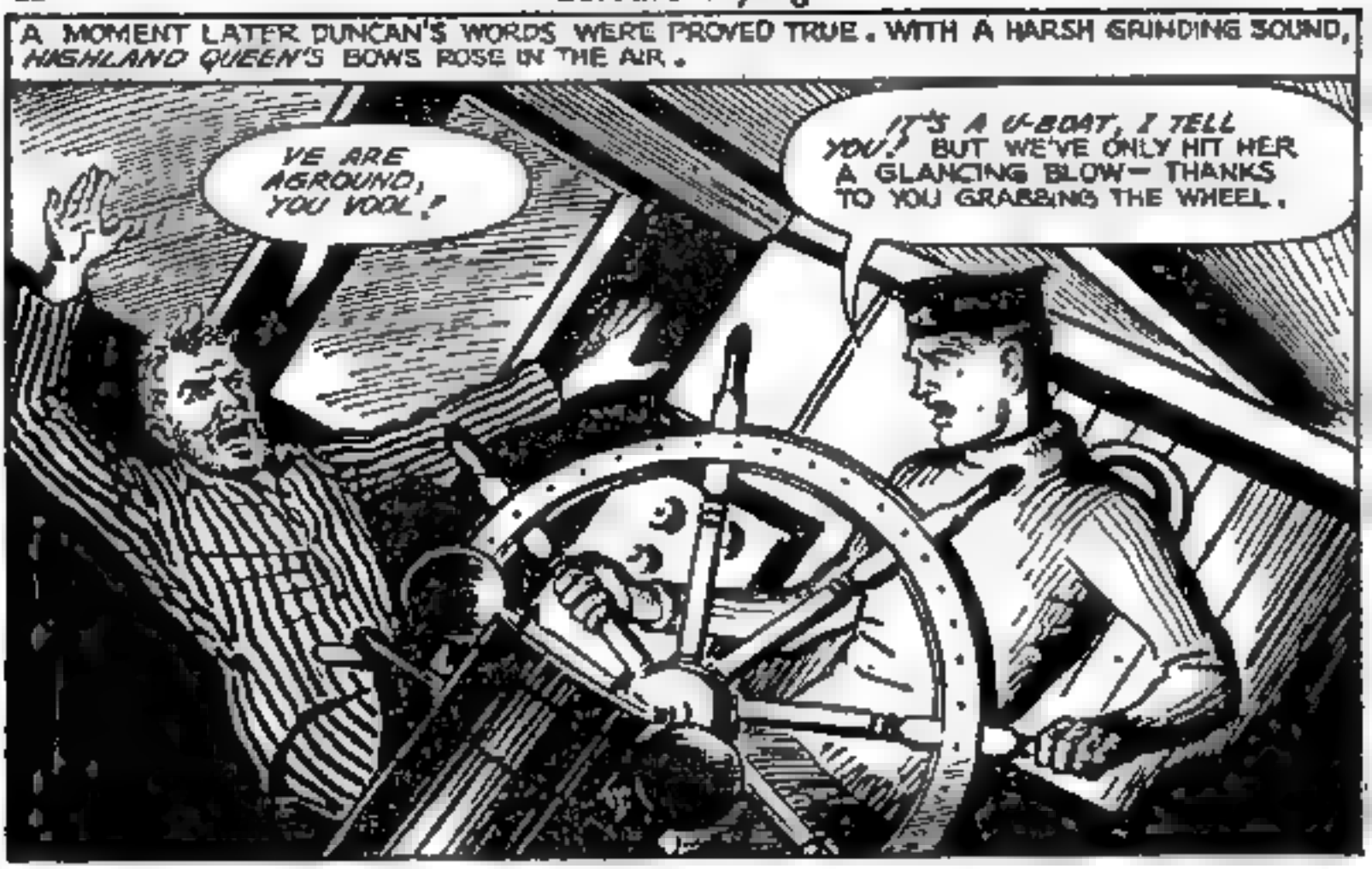
IT'S LIKE A WHALE . . . BUT . . . NO . . . IT MUST BE . . . *THERE'S ONLY ONE THING IT CAN BE . . . A U-BOAT!*

ONLY A SUBMARINE COULD MAKE THAT SHADOW. AND NO BRITISH SUBMARINE WOULD BE SUBMERGED IN THE ANCHORAGE AT NIGHT. THERE WAS ONLY ONE ANSWER . . .
KARL . . . KARL . . . THERE'S A U-BOAT IN THE ANCHORAGE . . .
U-BOAT? VOT U-BOAT . . . ACH, VY DO YOU YAKE ME WITH YOUR NONSENSE . . .

THERE WAS NO TIME FOR ARGUMENT. IF A U-BOAT HAD SOMEHOW SLIPPED PAST THE BOOM DEFENCE, IT COULD CAUSE TERRIBLE DAMAGE TO THE ANCHORED FLEET. *HIGHLAND QUEEN'S* ENGINE RUMBLED INTO LIFE AT DUNCAN'S FIRST TOUCH OF THE STARTER . . .
THIS IS THE COURSE IT WAS ON - AND IT CAN'T TURN MUCH OR IT'S INTO THE SHALLOWS . . .

DUNCAN HAD GUESSED RIGHT. DEAD AHEAD A SLENDER PERISCOPE BROKE SURFACE AS THE U BOAT SKIPPER PICKED THE TARGETS FOR H.S TORPEDOES . . .
IF I CAN RAM HIM IT MIGHT DAMAGE HIM ENOUGH TO STOP HIM FIR'NG ANY TINFISH!

BUT THE SOUND OF THE ENG NES HAD ROUSED ERICSEN AGAIN AND EVEN AS THE HIGHLAND QUEEN BORE DOWN ON THE HIDDEN U-BOAT . . .
YOU YOOL! YOT ARE YOU DOING?
THERE'S A U-BOAT, THERE, I TELL YOU!


A MOMENT LATER DUNCAN'S WORDS WERE PROVED TRUE. WITH A HARSH GRINDING SOUND, HIGHLAND QUEEN'S BOWS ROSE IN THE AIR.
VE ARE AGROUND, YOU VOOL!
IT'S A U-BOAT, I TELL YOU! BUT WE'VE ONLY HIT HER A GLANCING BLOW— THANKS TO YOU GRABBING THE WHEEL.

WHETHER THAT COLLISION HAD DAMAGED THE U-BOAT OR ONLY FRIGHTENED ITS COMMANDER INTO ABANDONING HIS PLANS, DUNCAN NEVER KNEW. CERTAINLY IT FIRED NO TORPEDOES. BUT NEXT DAY . . .
THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS CHARGE, MACLEOD. TAKING AWAY A NAVAL VESSEL... RUNNING IT AGROUND... STRIKING A SUPERIOR OFFICER...
SIR, THERE WAS A U-BOAT—

BEFORE JUDGMENT COULD BE GIVEN, THE FLOTILLA COMMANDER WAS CALLED URGENTLY TO THE PORT CAPTAIN'S OFFICE.
AS SOME OF YOU KNOW, BOOM DEFENCE ASDIC REPORTED A U-BOAT LEAVING THE ANCHORAGE LAST NIGHT. WE DON'T KNOW HOW IT GOT IN OR WHY IT DID NO DAMAGE. BUT ALL SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN FUTURE . . .
GREAT SCOTT! THAT FELLOW MACLEOD WAS TELLING THE TRUTH!

IT FOLLOWED, THEN, THAT ERICSEN HAD BEEN AT FAULT IN NOT INVESTIGATING DUNCAN'S WARNING AND THE NORWEGIAN WAS REMOVED FROM COMMAND OF THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.
AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE I'M PUTTING YOU IN CHARGE, MACLEOD. THINK YOU CAN HANDLE HER?
THAT I CAN, SIR!

AT LAST HE HAD WHAT HE WISHED. HE WAS EVEN ABLE TO TAKE THE *QUEEN* FISHING AGAIN WITH MAKESHIFT GEAR TO HELP OUT WITH THE FLEET RATIONS.

COME ON. GET THOSE TRAWL LINES SQUARED UP... WE SHOULD GET A GOOD CATCH THIS TIME.

BUT DUNCAN'S HAPPINESS DID NOT LAST FOR LONG...

THE BOAT'S BEING TRANSFERRED TO A MINESWEEPING FLOTILLA. NOW, I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, MACLEOD. YOU'VE DONE WELL HERE...

I'D LIKE TO GANG WITH THE BOAT, SIR.

BECAUSE OF HER WOODEN HULL, *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WAS FITTED TO SWEEP FOR THE NEW MAGNETIC MINES IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL. SPECIAL EQUIPMENT WAS FITTED — AND AN OFFICER PLACED IN COMMAND...

AN OLD FISHING BOAT! AND I'D HOPED FOR ONE OF THE LATEST CRAFT. WHAT A TUB!

PD. 99

DUNCAN SOON SENSED HIS NEW C.O.'S ATTITUDE — AND RESENTED THE SLIGHT ON THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN*. WORSE STILL, THE NEWLY-COMMISSIONED OFFICER, SUB-LIEUTENANT MANDERS, WAS NO SEAMAN . . . NOT BY DUNCAN'S STANDARDS.

THEN HE WANTED TO SHOOT THE GEAR TO LEEWARD. IF HE HAD, WE'D HAVE DRIFTED DOWN ON IT AND GOT IT ROUND THE SCREW.

HE'S A RIGHT 'UN, JOCK!

INCOMPETENCE, DUNCAN COULD STAND, EVEN MANDERS' SNEERING MANNER. BUT WHEN HE PUT THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* IN DANGER . . . THAT WAS ANOTHER MATTER . . .

THAT'S ONE MINE WON'T SINK ANY SHIPS! BLOW, YOU PERISHER. BLOW!

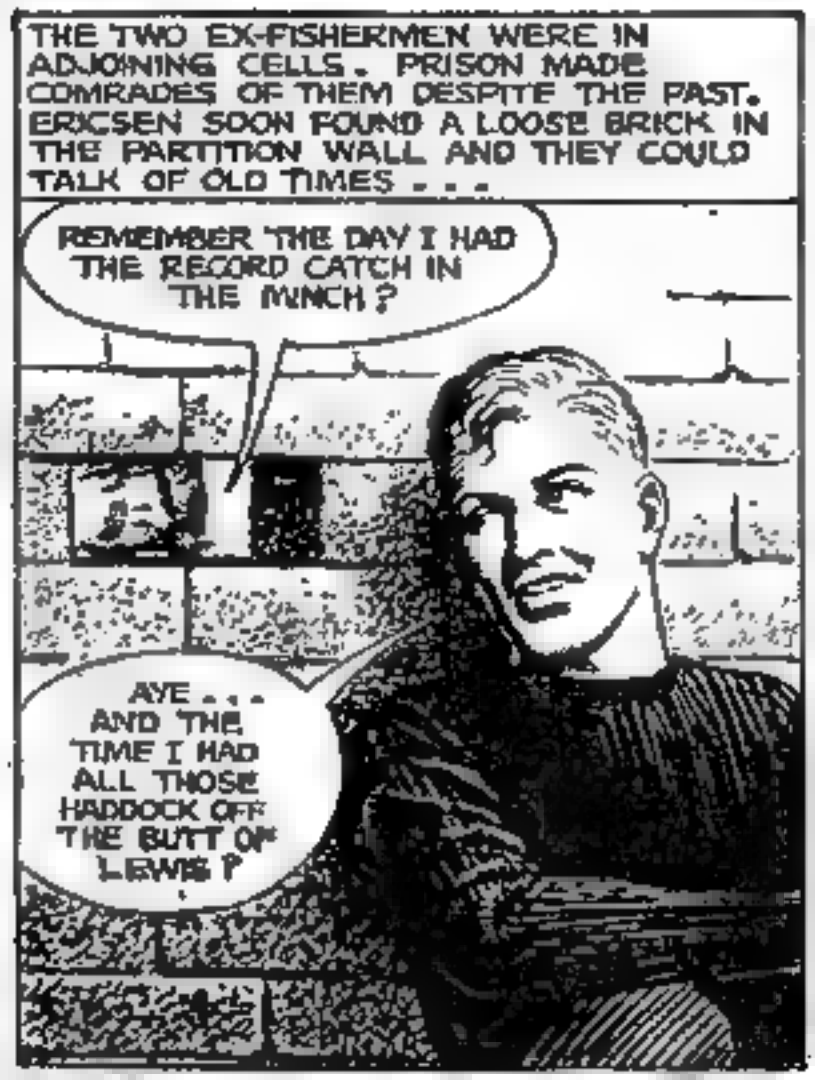
EXCUSE ME, SIR, I'D BETTER TURN TO PORT. THOSE ROCKS AHEEAD . . .

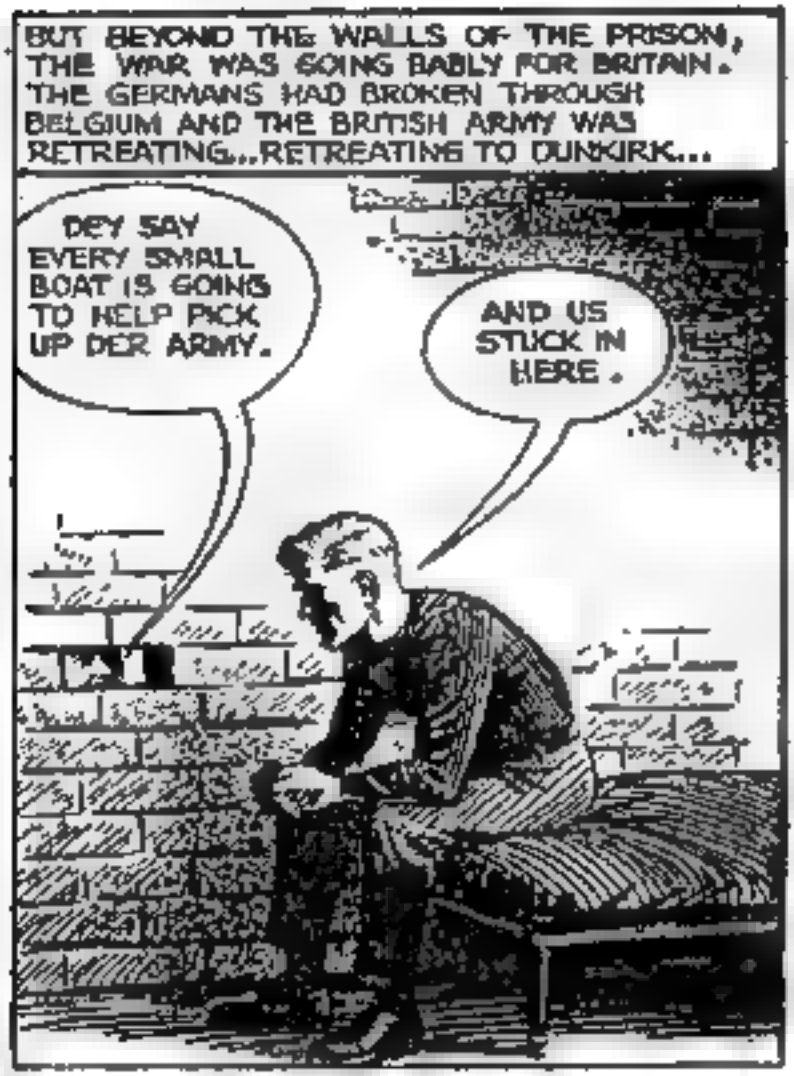
ROCKS? WHAT ROCKS? KEEP YOUR COURSE!

BUT ALREADY DUNCAN WAS SPINNING THE WHEEL TO PORT. MANDERS WHIRLED ON HIM ANGRILY . . .
I'M IN COMMAND HERE. HOLD YOUR COURSE, I SAID.
OCH, GO PEDDLE PEANUTS... SIR!

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN MISSED THE ROCKS ALL RIGHT. BUT DUNCAN WAS SOON ON ROCKS OF ANOTHER KIND FOR DISOBEYING AN ORDER AND USING INSUBORDINATE LANGUAGE. IT WAS ONLY DUNCAN'S WORD AGAINST THAT OF HIS OFFICER THAT THE BOAT HAD BEEN IN DANGER.
SIXTY DAYS IN HERE... AND WHAT WILL THAT FOOL BE DOING TO THE QUEEN MEANWHILE?

STRANGELY ENOUGH, IN THE NAVAL DETENTION BARRACKS, DUNCAN MET ANOTHER BOAT-BUTCHER— ERICSEN.
SO! THE VIRTUOUS MACLEOD IS IN THE NICK! VOT HAPPEN, HUH? YOU SINK BOAT?
YOU KNOW I'D NEVER DO HER HARM!
STOP THAT TALKING, YOU SOMNS BILGE-RATS!


THE TWO EX-FISHERMEN WERE IN ADJOINING CELLS. PRISON MADE COMRADES OF THEM DESPITE THE PAST. ERICSEN SOON FOUND A LOOSE BRICK IN THE PARTITION WALL AND THEY COULD TALK OF OLD TIMES . . .
REMEMBER THE DAY I HAD THE RECORD CATCH IN THE MINCH?
AYE . . . AND THE TIME I HAD ALL THOSE HADDOCK OFF THE BUTT OF LEWIS?


BUT BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE PRISON, THE WAR WAS GOING BADLY FOR BRITAIN. THE GERMANS HAD BROKEN THROUGH BELGIUM AND THE BRITISH ARMY WAS RETREATING...RETREATING TO DUNKIRK...
DEY SAY EVERY SMALL BOAT IS GOING TO HELP PICK UP DER ARMY.
AND US STUCK IN HERE.

FOR A WHILE, DUNCAN RAGED IN FRUSTRATION AT BEING CONFINED WHEN EVERY SEAMAN SHOULD BE AT SEA — THEN AS HE TALKED WITH ERICSEN, THE DETERMINATION TO ESCAPE GREW IN HIM. THAT NIGHT . . .

IT'S MOVING . . . I THINK IT'S MOVING!

HEAVING WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH, DUNCAN FORCED A SLATE LOOSE. IT WAS THE WORK OF MOMENTS TO ENLARGE THE HOLE ENOUGH FOR ERICSEN TO WIGGLE THROUGH AND JOIN HIM ON THE ROOF.

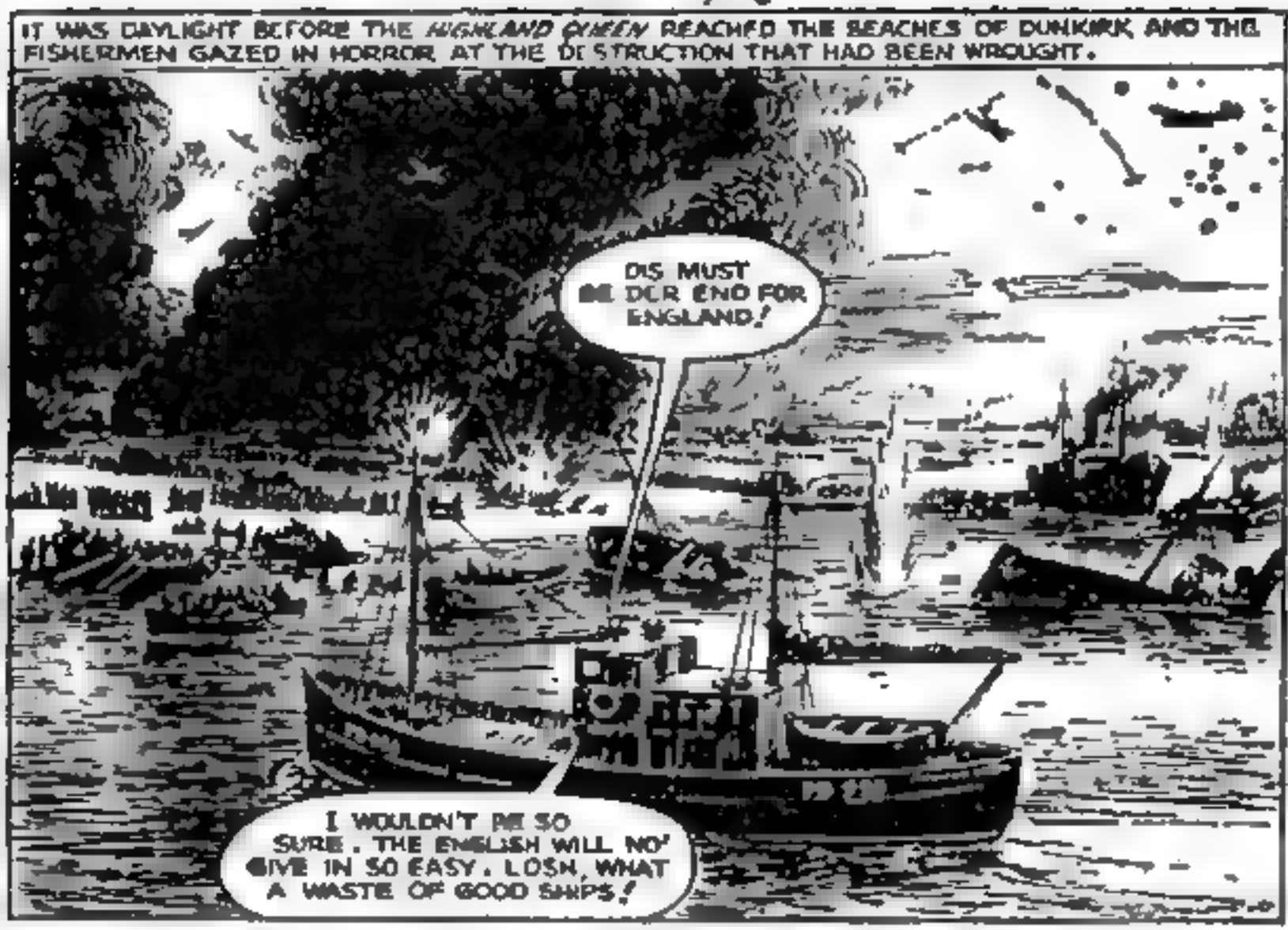
ALL WE HAVE TO DO NOW IS SWARM DOWN A STACK-PIPE.

AND DERE GOES DER AIR RAID SIREN. NO ONE WILL SEE US.

TO DUNCAN'S DELIGHT, HE FOUND THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* LYING UNMANNED ALONGSIDE THE QUAY. SHE WAS EMPTY OF STORES . . . AND CREW. SHE MUST BE IN FOR OVERHAUL. SOON SHE WAS HEADING SEAWARD . . .

VELL, WE DODGED DER PATROLS! NOW WHAT?

THOSE LIGHTS WILL BE DUNKIRK. IT'LL NO' BE A HARD PLACE TO FIND THIS NIGHT.


IT WAS DAYLIGHT BEFORE THE HIGHLAND QUEEN REACHED THE BEACHES OF DUNKIRK AND THE FISHERMEN GAZED IN HORROR AT THE DESTRUCTION THAT HAD BEEN WROUGHT.
DIS MUST BE DER END FOR ENGLAND!
I WOULDN'T BE SO SURE. THE ENGLISH WILL NO' GIVE IN SO EASY. LOSH, WHAT A WASTE OF GOOD SHIPS!

GERMAN PLANES WERE EVERYWHERE, MERCILESSLY STRAFING THE MEN THAT CROWDED THE BEACHES...
A PLANE - COMING FOR US!
AND US NO' ARMED ...BUT WAIT. HERE, TAKE THE WHEEL, ERICSEN!

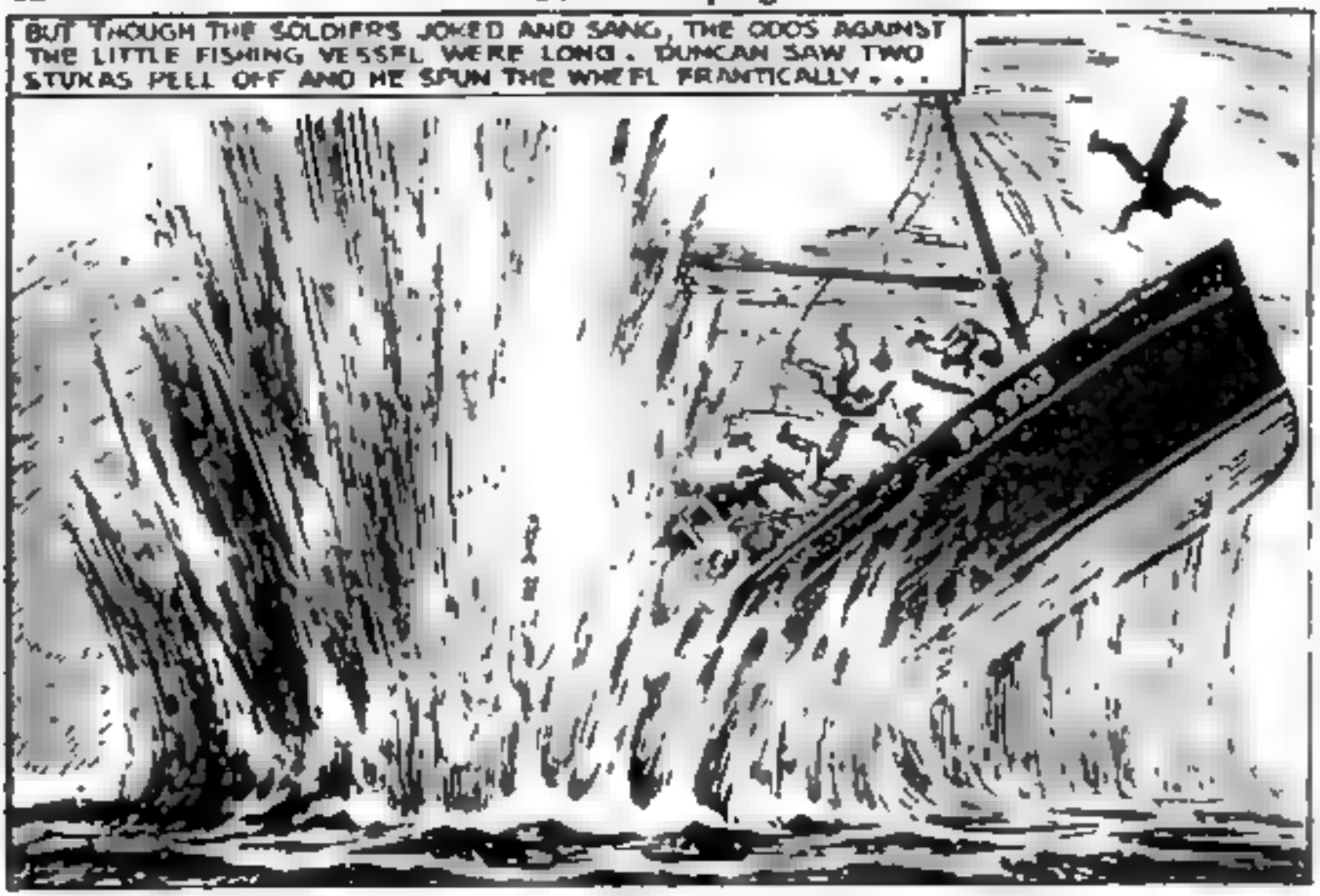
DUNCAN HAD SUDDENLY REMEMBERED THE LAST TIME WHEN THE HIGHLAND QUEEN WAS STRAFED...AND THE SOUVENIR LEWIS GUN THEY HAD TAKEN FROM THE MINESWEEPER.
IT COULD BE HERE YET FOR THEY LEFT OTHER THINGS STILL IN HER ... AH. HERE IT IS!

HIS REACHING FINGERS TOUCHED COLD STEEL. HE LUGGED IT OUT AND CLAMBERED ON DECK. THE M.E.109 WAS SWEEPING LOW... SURE IT WAS STRIKING A DEFENCELESS TARGET.
HERE, MY MANNIE, TAKE THIS LOT BACK TO YOUR HITLER.

SMOKE WAS POURING FROM THE GERMAN'S FUSELAGE AS IT DRONED AWAY... AND IT DID NOT TURN BACK TO ATTACK AGAIN. THEY WERE CLOSE IN TO THE BEACH — AND THE WAITING LINES OF SOLDIERS...
COME ON, THEN, ANY MORE FOR A TRIP ROUND-THE-LIGHT'OUSE?
SLOW... DEAD SLOW... WE'RE ALMOST AGROUND.
PD993

THANKFULLY THE SOLDIERS CLAMBERED ABOARD THE HIGHLAND QUEEN FOR ALREADY GERMAN SHELLS WERE RAISING FOUNTAINS OF WATER ALL ALONG THAT BEACH OF DEATH...
UNARMED MEN GET BELOW — OTHERS STAND BY FOR ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE!

THE TIDE WAS EBBING FAST AND THE HIGHLAND QUEEN'S KEEL GRATED ON THE SAND AS DUNCAN PULLED HER OFF THE BEACH AT LAST AND HEADED FOR THE OPEN SEA...
KEEP WATCH FOR DEEP WATER, KARL. THERE ARE A LOT OF BANKS — THE REST OF YOU KEEP YOUR EYES SKINNED FOR JERRY PLANES!
PD 993
A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE... HEY, STEWARD, WHERE'S ME BRANDY AND SODA WOT I ORDERED.


BUT THOUGH THE SOLDIERS JOKED AND SANG, THE ODDS AGAINST THE LITTLE FISHING VESSEL WERE LONG. DUNCAN SAW TWO STUKAS PEEL OFF AND HE SPUN THE WHEEL FRANTICALLY . . .

THE BOMB MISSED BY FEET ONLY AND THE EXPLOSION LIFTED THE BOAT OUT OF THE WATER. MIRACULOUSLY, ITS BACK HAD NOT BEEN BROKEN, BUT IT SEEMED TO DUNCAN AS HE CRAWLED OUT ON TO THE DECK, IT MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN . . .
THE BOMBS SWEPT THE DECK CLEAR! KARL'S GONE . . . WE'RE HOLED AND AGROUND.

Chapter 3. EASY PREY

ASHORE OFF AN ENEMY-HELD COAST, HIS BELOVED BOAT HOLED, THE FUTURE SEEMED AS BLEAK AS IT COULD BE TO DUNCAN MACLEOD. AND YET A LITTLE LATER . . .

WE'RE MAYBE NO' DONE FOR YET. THE JERRIES WON'T BOTHER ABOUT A DERELICT BOAT THIS DAY, SO IF WE SIT HERE SNUG AND QUIET TILL DARK . . .

DUNCAN WAS RIGHT. THE GERMANS WERE TOO BUSY ASHORE TO BOTHER ABOUT THE WRECKS THAT LITTERED THE BEACH AND WHEN NIGHT FELL DUNCAN SET HIS CREW TO WORK

ONE MORE PATCH AND SHE'S READY FOR THE WATER.

SURE, BUT HOW DO WE GET HER TO THE WATER?

IT WAS A GOOD QUESTION. THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* LAY ON A SANDBANK. EVEN WHEN THE TIDE CAME IN SHE WOULD BE OUT OF THE CHANNEL – AND SHE WAS FAR TOO HEAVY TO PULL ACROSS THE SAND...
WE DON'T GET HER INTO THE WATER – WE BRING THE WATER TO HER!
WHAT?

ONLY THE HOPE OF [illegible] DRIVEN THE MEN TO THE WORK THAT BEGAN NOW, FOR IT WAS THEIR ONE HOPE OF GETTING THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* OFF THE BEACH...
DIGGING SANDCASTLES – AT MY AGE!
BLACKPOOL WAS NEVER LIKE THIS!

THEY WERE DIGGING A CANAL – A CANAL THAT WOULD FILL WITH WATER AS THE TIDE ROSE AND ALLOW THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* TO FLOAT INTO DEEPER WATER.
ALL RIGHT, LADS, THAT SHOULD DO.
THANK HEAVENS FOR THAT – IT'S BLOOMIN' WARM WORK!

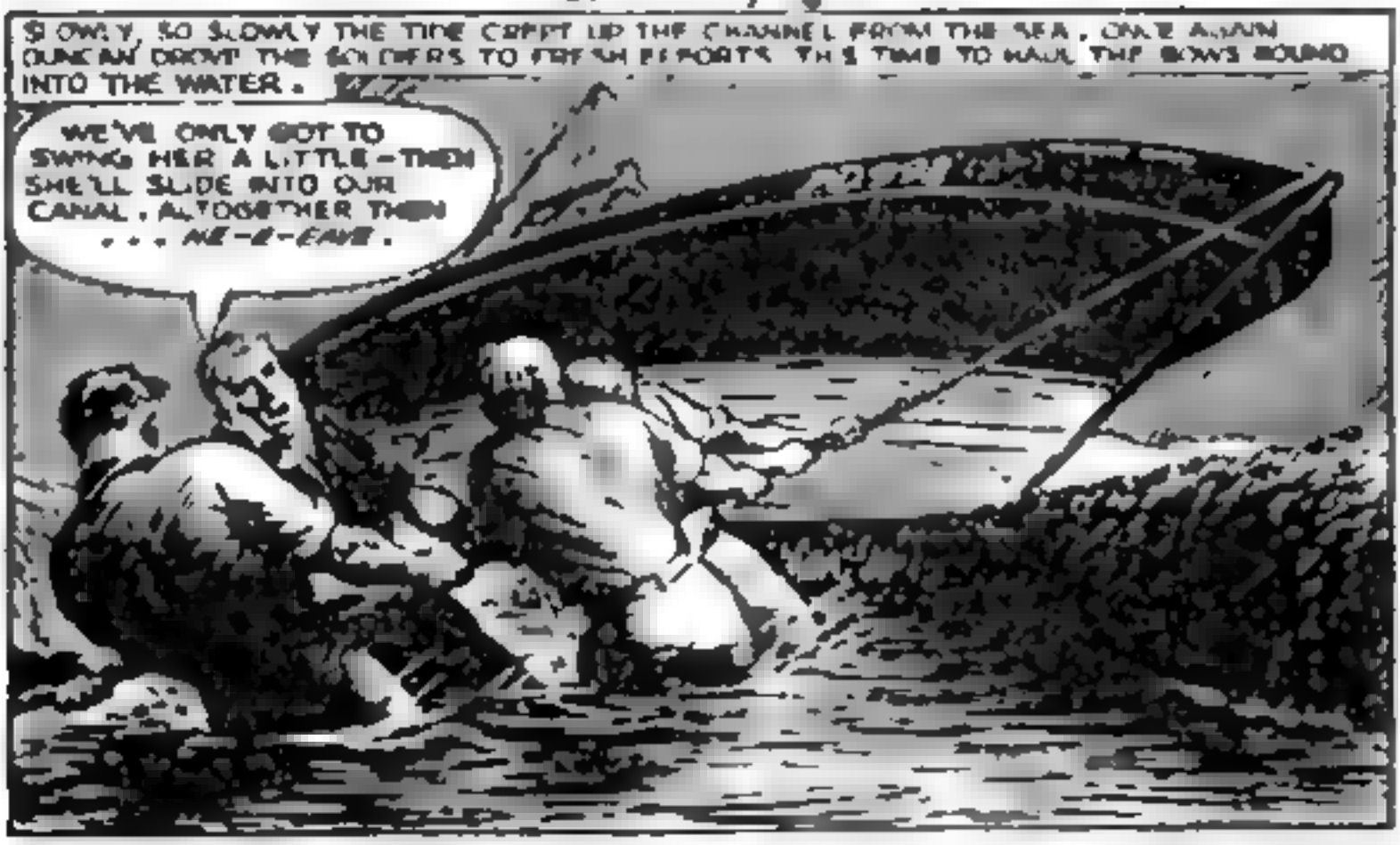
SLOWLY, SO SLOWLY THE TIDE CREPT UP THE CHANNEL FROM THE SEA. ONCE AGAIN DUNCAN DROVE THE SOLDIERS TO FRESH EFFORTS. THIS TIME TO HAUL THE BOWS ROUND INTO THE WATER.

WE'VE ONLY GOT TO SWING HER A LITTLE—THEN SHE'LL SLIDE INTO OUR CANAL. ALTOGETHER THEN . . . HE-E-EAVE.

THE STURDY FISHING BOAT SCARCELY BUDGED AN INCH AND DUNCAN'S HEART SANK. BUT HE URGED THEM TO TRY AGAIN AND SUDDENLY, THE BOAT BEGAN TO SWING . . .

SHE DID IT! SHE DID IT!

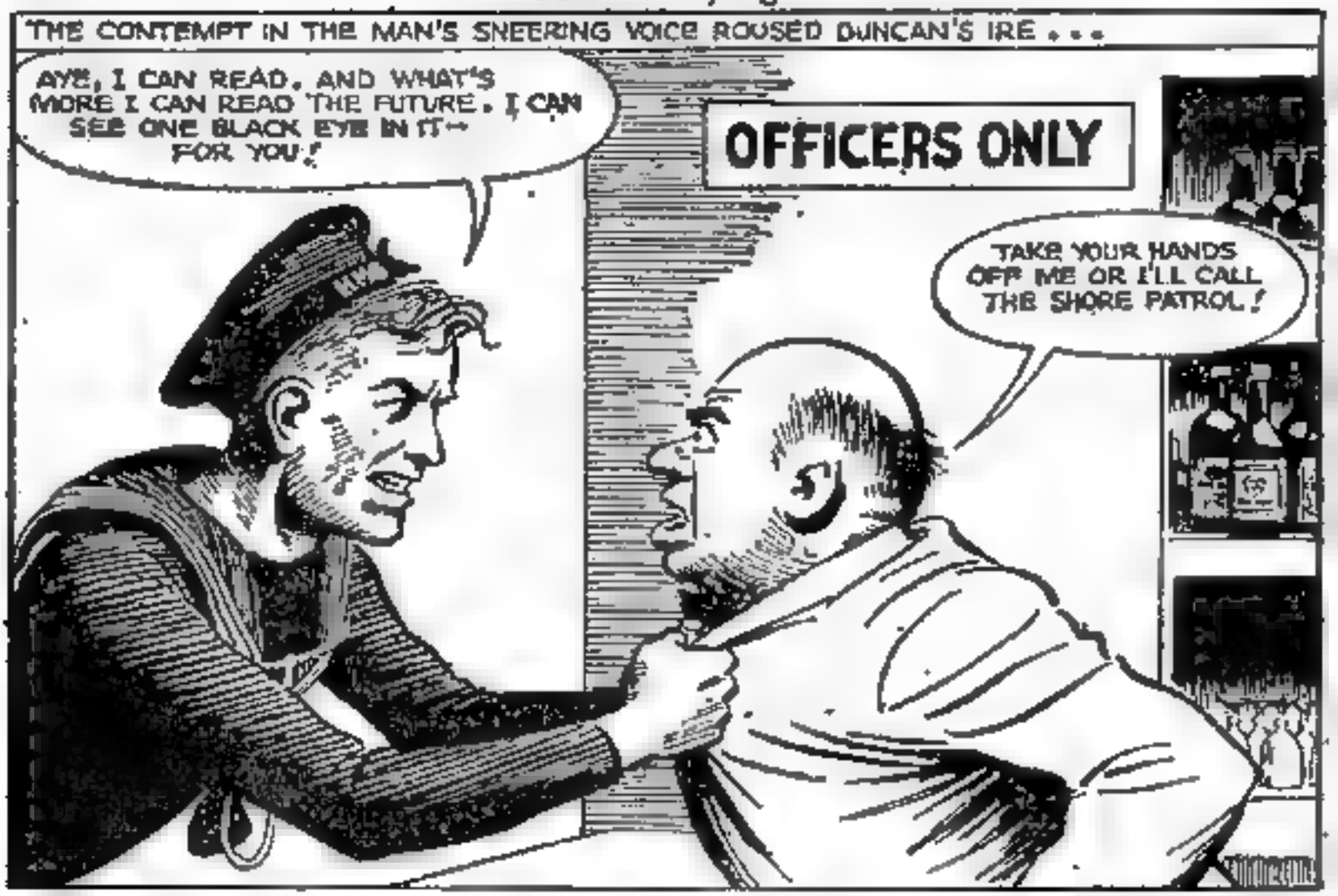
PERISHIN' SAILORS! DIDN'T WE HELP A BIT, MATE?



THE BOAT'S ENGINES WERE UNDAMAGED AND A LITTLE LATER A PUZZLED GERMAN SENTRY GAZED SEAWARD INTO THE DARKNESS AND WONDERED . . .
"BLESS 'EM ALL . . . THE LONG AND THE SHORT AND THE TALL."
ENGLANDERS . . . NO. IT CANNOT BE . . .

HIGHLAND QUEEN MADE A SAFE AND UNEVENTFUL PASSAGE HOME AND DUNCAN FOUND HIMSELF PARADED WITH OTHER HEROES OF THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION.
CONDUCT ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY . . .
IT'S THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WHO SHOULD BE GETTING THIS.

THE MOMENT THE PARADE WAS OVER, TWO BURLY NAVAL POLICEMEN FELL IN ON EITHER SIDE OF DUNCAN — HIS ESCAPE FROM THE DETENTION BARRACKS HAD CAUGHT UP WITH HIM!
A GONG AND THE CELLS IN THE SAME DAY. THAT'S A NAVY FOR YOU!
ALL RIGHT, HERO. NOW WE'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU — A NICE COLD CELL.
RESIGNEDLY, THE YOUNG SCOT ENDURED HIS PUNISHMENT UNTIL THE SIXTY DAYS WERE UP.
LOSH! I'LL TREAT MYSELF TO A COMFORTABLE BED FOR A NIGHT BEFORE I REPORT BACK TO BARRACKS.
HOTEL
ENGROSSED IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS, DUNCAN HAD FAILED TO NOTICE ONE THING . . .
I'D LIKE TO —
OFFICERS ONLY
MAYBE YOU WOULD, SAILOR — BUT YOU WON'T HERE! CAN'T YOU LOWER DECK TYPES READ?


THE CONTEMPT IN THE MAN'S SNEERING VOICE ROUSED DUNCAN'S IRE . . .
AYE, I CAN READ. AND WHAT'S MORE I CAN READ THE FUTURE. I CAN SEE ONE BLACK EYE IN IT— FOR YOU!
OFFICERS ONLY
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME OR I'LL CALL THE SHORE PATROL!

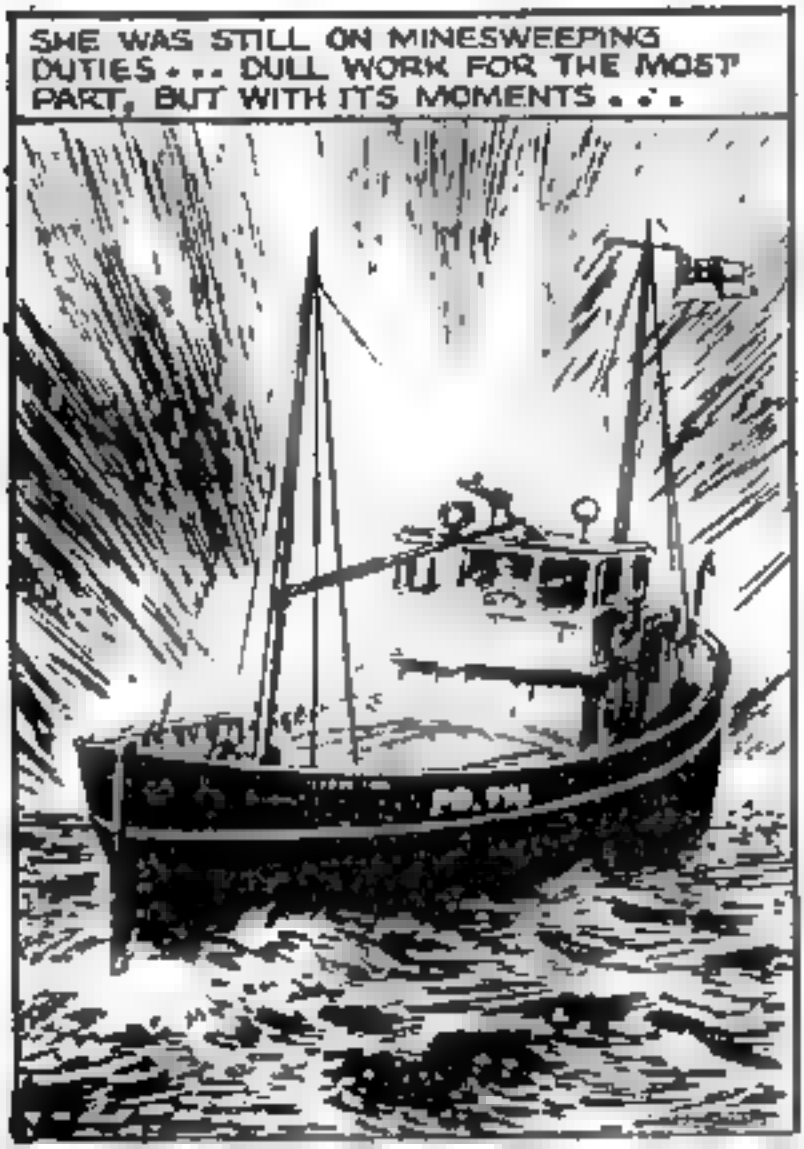
FOR AN INSTANT, IT SEEMED THAT DUNCAN WAS HEADING STRAIGHT BACK TO THE DETENTION BARRACKS. THEN . . .
TAKE IT EASY, SAILOR. YOU DON'T WANT TO LAND YOURSELF IN TROUBLE OVER — HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU BEFORE?
WHAT— SORRY, SIR.

FOR A MOMENT THE TWO STARED AT EACH OTHER AND THE PAST STIRRED IN DUNCAN'S MEMORY.
WAIT NOW . . . YOU WERE ON THAT MINESWEEPER TRAWLER . . .
AND YOU WERE SKIPPER OF THE BOAT THAT SAVED ME . HERE — LET'S GO SOMEWHERE WHERE WE CAN TALK .

IT WAS A LONG TALK THAT THEY HAD . . .
IT'S A PIECE OF NONSENSE A QUALIFIED SKIPPER LIKE YOU BEING ON THE LOWER DECK . I'LL HAVE TO PULL A FEW STRINGS . . .
JUST SO LONG AS I'M WITH MY BOAT I DON'T MIND WHAT I AM .

THE COMMANDER WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD. WHAT STRINGS HE PULLED, DUNCAN DID NOT KNOW, BUT A FEW WEEKS LATER . . .
WONDER WHAT HE'D SAY IF HE RECOGNISED ME AS THE MAN HE RAN IN LAST MONTH!

IT WAS A PROUD AND HAPPY MOMENT FOR THE NEW SUB-LIEUTENANT WHEN HE BOARDED THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* AGAIN — HER SKIPPER ONCE MORE.
THEY'VE DONE A GOOD JOB OF PATCHING HER UP.


SHE WAS STILL ON MINESWEEPING DUTIES... DULL WORK FOR THE MOST PART, BUT WITH ITS MOMENTS...

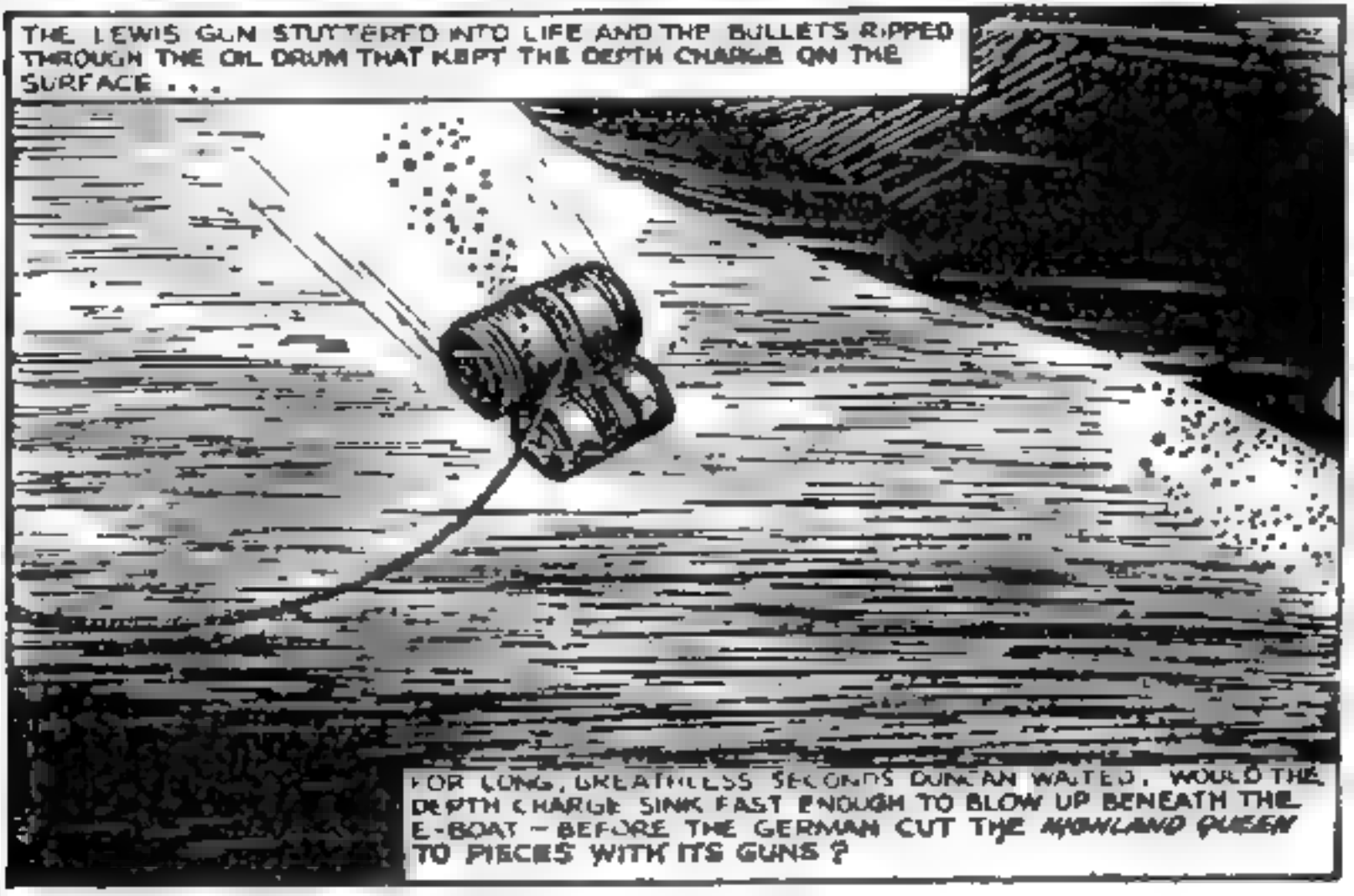
LOOK WHAT THAT LAST MINE THREW ON DECK, SKIPPER!
MAYBE AFTER THE WAR I'LL GIVE UP NETS AND JUST USE DEPTH CHARGES FOR MY FISHING.

THEN ONE NIGHT AFTER A MINE-LAYING GERMAN PLANE HAD BEEN REPORTED, THE HIGHLAND QUEEN WAS AT SEA, SEARCHING FOR A POSSIBLE FRESHLY-LAID MINEFIELD.
TELL THEM TO STOP HER. I THINK I CAN HEAR ANOTHER ENGINE.
THE SOUND OF A HIGH-POWERED DEISEL CAME CLEARLY ON THE NIGHT AIR. DUNCAN'S EYES TRIED TO PIERCE THE DARKNESS.
I WAS RIGHT. THAT'S THE SOUND OF A GERMAN E-BOAT. HEAD NOR'-EAST BY NORTH. OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO SNEAK AWAY.
THE QUEEN WOULD BE NO MATCH FOR THE FAST, HEAVILY ARMED GERMAN VESSEL.

BUT EVEN AS THE HIGHLAND QUEEN'S BOWS BEGAN TO SWING ROUND, THE MOON SUDDENLY BURST THROUGH THE CLOUDS. AT THE SAME MOMENT, THE E-BOAT'S ENGINES REVVED . . .
THEY'VE SEEN US! NOW WE'RE FOR IT! KEEP HER ON THAT COURSE, HELMSMAN — I'M GOING FORRARD . . .

THE QUEEN CARRIED HALF A DOZEN SMALL DEPTH CHARGES FOR ANTI-SUBMARINE WORK. THEY WERE NEVER INTENDED FOR THE TASK WHICH DUNCAN HAD IN MIND.
NOW SET THE CHARGE FOR TEN FEET — NO, MAKE IT FIVE!

THE E-BOAT CAME STORMING UP ASTERN, SURE OF AN EASY KILL. ITS CAPTAIN DID NOT HEED THE OIL DRUM THAT BOBBED IN THE WAKE OF ITS PREY.
I'M GOING TO FIRE AT THE DRUM AND SINK IT, JUST AS THE E BOAT RUNS OVER IT. THE DEPTH CHARGE WILL SINK AND BLOW AT FIVE FEET . . . I HOPE . . .


THE LEWIS GUN STUTTERED INTO LIFE AND THE BULLETS RIPPED THROUGH THE OIL DRUM THAT KEPT THE DEPTH CHARGE ON THE SURFACE . . .
FOR LONG, BREATHLESS SECONDS DUNCAN WAITED. WOULD THE DEPTH CHARGE SINK FAST ENOUGH TO BLOW UP BENEATH THE E-BOAT – BEFORE THE GERMAN CUT THE HIGHLAND QUEEN TO PIECES WITH ITS GUNS ?

IN THAT MOMENT OF VICTORY, THE
THE MEN WHO WOULD HAVE DESTROYED THEM WITHOUT MERCY.
FIRST YOU SINK 'EM, THEN YOU SAVE 'EM!
THERE'S ANOTHER OVER THERE.

AS THEY HEADED FOR HOME, DUNCAN PREPARED TO QUESTION THE PRISONERS.
WHERE HAVE I SEEN THEIR CAPTAIN BEFORE — OR HAVE I?
YOU ARE ENTITLED ONLY TO ASK NAME, RANK AND NUMBER. I AM LEUTNANT HEINRICH VON ERICSEN. MY NUMBER IS . . .

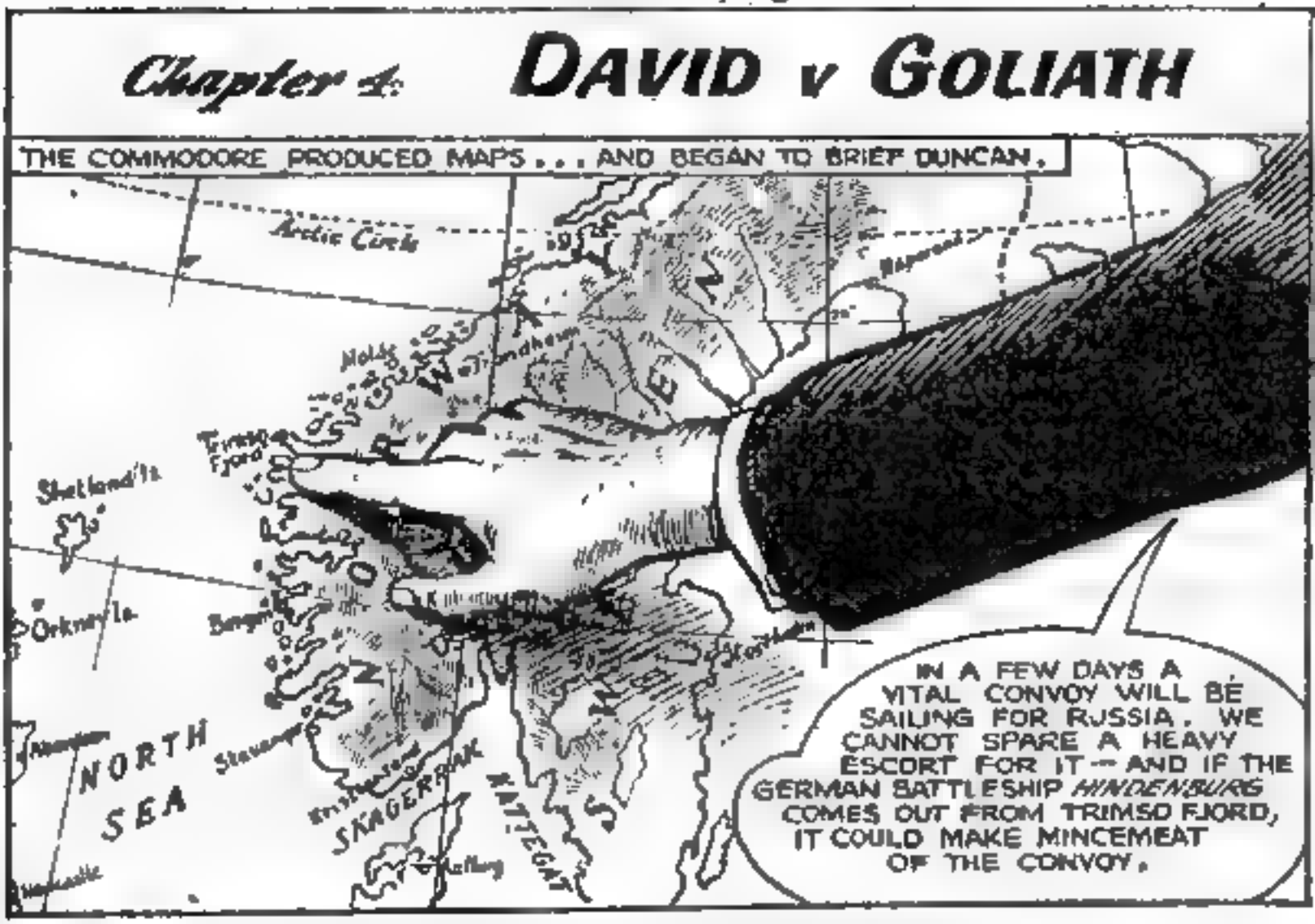
THE GERMAN'S SURLY ANSWER SET MANY THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES STIRRING IN DUNCAN'S MIND.
ERICSEN? COULD HE BE A RELATIVE OF KARL'S? NO . . . KARL WAS NORWEGIAN . . . AND YET THAT'S WHO HE REMINDS ME OF.

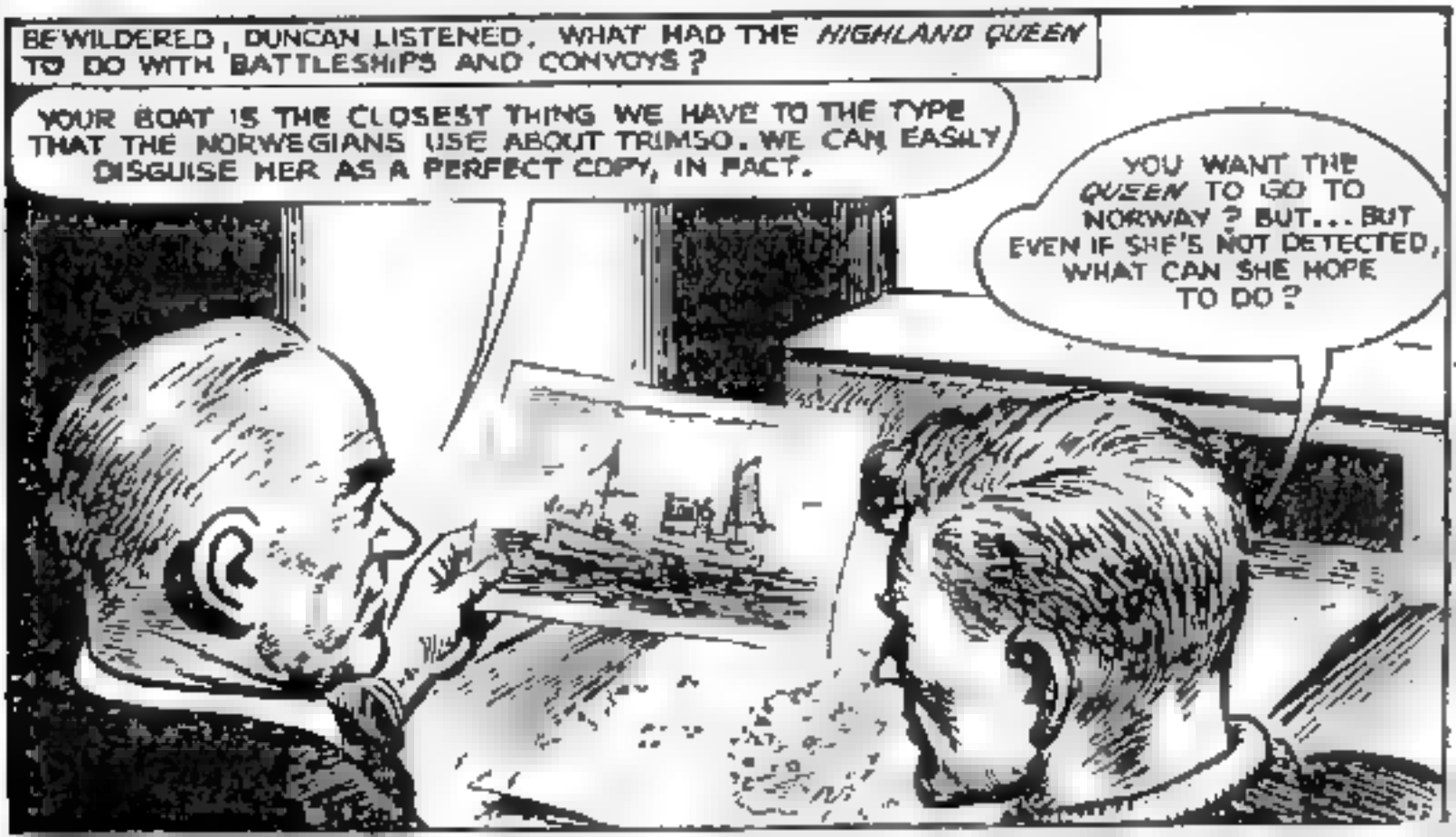
SO FAR AS DUNCAN WAS CONCERNED, THE QUESTIONS STAYED UNANSWERED. WHEN HE REACHED PORT, THERE WAS NEWS THAT DROVE ALL THOUGHT OF BOTH THE ERICSENS FROM HIS MIND . . .
YOU'RE TO UNLOAD ALL YOUR MINESWEEPING EQUIPMENT. YOU'RE GOING NORTH TO SCOTLAND — ON A SPECIAL MISSION.
SCOTLAND!
THERE WAS A SONG IN DUNCAN'S HEART AS THE HIGHLAND QUEEN HEADED FOR HER HOME WATERS AT LAST . . .
ROLLING UP THE CLYDE . . . TUM-TE-TUM . . . ROLLING UP THE CLYDE.
HE MAY BE A GOOD SKIPPER — BUT HE'S A SHOCKING SINGER!

DUNCAN COULD ONLY GUESS AT THE MISSION THAT HAD BROUGHT HIM NORTH — AND EVEN HIS WILDEST GUESS WOULD HAVE BEEN WIDE OF THE MARK. A STAFF CAR DREW UP AS THE HIGHLAND QUEEN BERTHED . . .
MACLEOD? GOOD! YOU'VE MADE FAST TIME . . . AND WE'VE NONE TO SPARE. LET'S GO BELOW.
I MUST BE DREAMING! A COMMODORE ON MY BOAT!

DUNCAN WAS DAZED ENOUGH AT THE SIGHT OF THE COMMODORE. HIS NEXT WORDS WERE EVEN MORE STARTLING . . .
SIT DOWN, MAN, SIT DOWN! NOW . . . I NEED YOU FOR A MISSION THAT MAY ALTER THE WHOLE COURSE OF THE WAR . . . THAT MAY MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VICTORY AND DEFEAT.
NOW I KNOW I'M DREAMING!

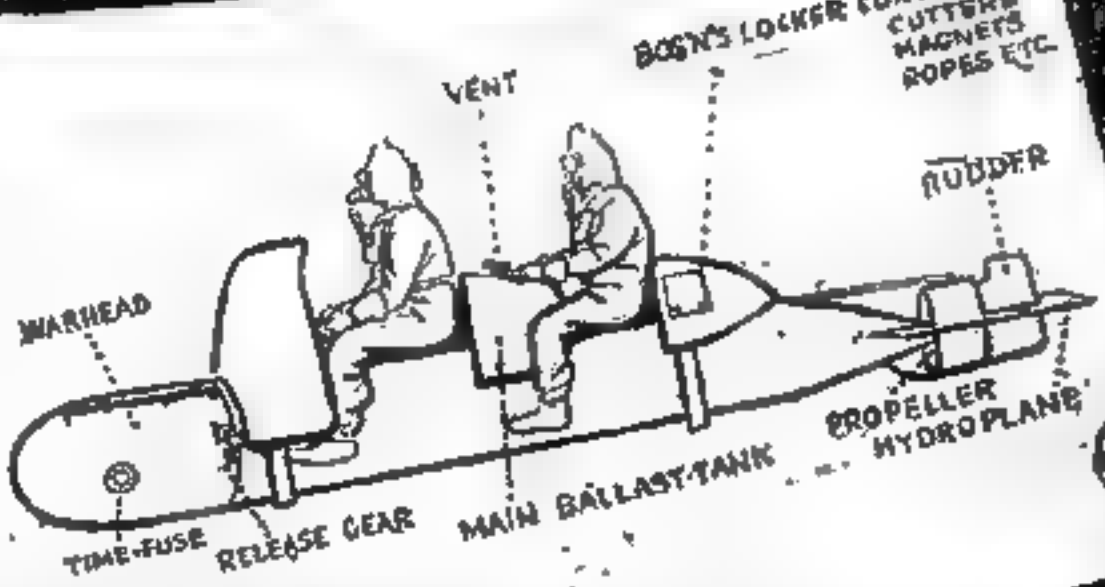
Chapter 4: DAVID v GOLIATH





SURELY THE NAVY DID NOT EXPECT THE LITTLE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* TO TACKLE A 30,000 TON BATTLESHIP? THE COMMODORE REACHED INTO HIS BRIEF-CASE AGAIN . . .

THIS IS A TWO-MAN TORPEDO — WE CALL IT A CHARIOT. IT HAS A DETACHABLE WARHEAD THAT THE CREW CAN FIX TO THE BOTTOM OF AN ENEMY SHIP. BUT ITS RANGE IS LIMITED — AND IT WILL BE *YOUR* JOB TO TAKE TWO OF THEM WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF THE *HINDENBURG*.



AT LAST DUNCAN BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND. ONLY A VESSEL LIKE THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* WHICH COULD BE PASSED OFF AS A LOCAL BOAT, WOULD HAVE A CHANCE OF GETTING THROUGH THE GERMAN PATROLS AND DEFENCES.

THIS IS A VOLUNTEER JOB, OF COURSE. YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO.

IF THE *QUEEN* GOES, I GO, SIR!

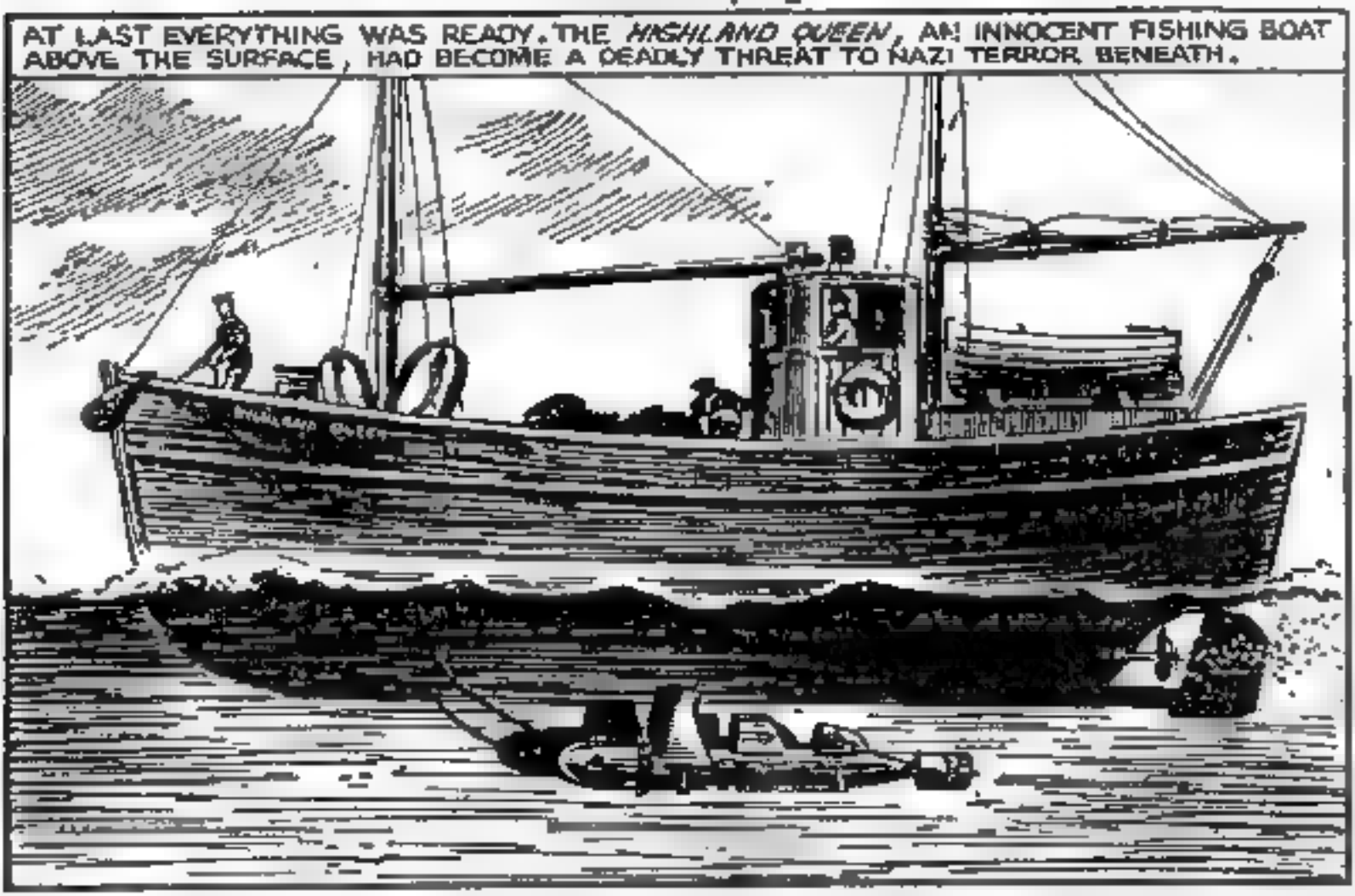
THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN'S* NEXT STOP WAS SHETLAND WHERE, IN A SECLUDED INLET, SHE WAS MADE READY FOR HER PERILOUS MISSION. SHIPWRIGHTS DISGUISED HER WHEELHOUSE. OTHERS FITTED SPECIAL UNDERWATER GEAR.

'THOSE HOOKS ARE FOR TOWING THE CHARIOTS. NATURALLY WE CAN'T CARRY THEM ON DECK SO THIS IS THE BEST WAY OF HIDING THEM IF WE'RE SEARCHED.

THAT'S CRAFTY— AND I SUPPOSE THEY'RE RELEASED FROM INSIDE WHEN THEY'RE NEEDED?

ELSEWHERE, THE CHARIOT CREWS WERE TRAINING HARD, SIMULATING ON AN OLD HULK THE ATTACK THEY WERE TO MAKE ON THE BATTLESHIP.

THE HIGH EXPLOSIVE WARHEADS WERE CLAMPED TO THE TARGET'S HULL BY POWERFUL MAGNETS.


AT LAST EVERYTHING WAS READY. THE HIGHLAND QUEEN, AN INNOCENT FISHING BOAT ABOVE THE SURFACE, HAD BECOME A DEADLY THREAT TO NAZI TERROR BENEATH.

FINAL DETAILS WERE SETTLED, THE CHARIOTEERS CAME ABOARD . . .
WELL, GOOD LUCK, MACLEOD, I KNOW YOU'LL DO YOUR UTMOST. YOUR NORWEGIAN PILOT IS JUST COMING.
THANK YOU, SIR.

IT WAS A RAINY NIGHT AND THE PILOT WAS MUFFLED IN OILSKINS SO DUNCAN HAD NO CHANCE TO RECOGNISE HIM UNTIL THEY WERE AT SEA — THEN . . .
ERICSEN! THE BOAT-BUTCHER!
VELL, VELL, VELL. VE MEET AGAIN...
FOR AN INSTANT DUNCAN FELT A NAMELESS SHIVER OF DREAD RUN DOWN HIS SPINE AS HE GAZED AT THE OTHER FISHERMAN . . .
BUT... BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD... AT DUNKIRK...
OH, I GOT ASHORE. THEN THE UNDERGROUND GOT ME BACK TO ENGLAND. AND VOT LUCK TO BE VITH YOU AGAIN, EH?
AS THE HIGHLAND QUEEN CHUGGED ON, IT PASSED THE CONVOY WHICH IT WAS ITS JOB TO PROTECT... FROM HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY.
ALL THOSE SHIPS WAITING FOR OUR SIGNAL BEFORE THEY CAN SAIL.' A THOUGHT, ISN'T IT, DUNCAN?
AYE! JUST TWO WORDS, "OPEN ROAD;" ON OUR RADIO — AND THEY'LL KNOW THE HINDENBURG'S OUT OF ACTION.

ALMOST INSTANTLY, DUNCAN BITTERLY REGRETTED HIS WORDS . . . FOR ERICSEN SEEMED TO SEIZE ON THEM EAGERLY.

OPEN ROAD', EH? SO THAT'S THE SIGNAL.

DUNCAN'S MEMORY WENT FLASHING BACK TO THE E-BOAT HE HAD SUNK AND ITS CAPTAIN WHO WAS ALSO AN ERICSEN. COULD KARL BE A GERMAN—SURELY NOT?

MUSTN'T LET MY IMAGINATION RUN AWAY WITH ME. HE WOULDN'T BE HERE IF HE WASN'T TRUSTWORTHY . . . AND YET HE DID ESCAPE FROM FRANCE. WISH I HADN'T TOLD HIM THE SIGNAL . . .

THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* PLOUGHED HER LONELY WAY NORTHWARDS AND AS ERICSEN TALKED OF OLD FISHING DAYS, DOUBTS OF HIS LOYALTY BEGAN TO DISPERSE FROM DUNCAN'S MIND.

AND YOU REMEMBER HOW VE ESCAPE FROM THE DETENTION BARRACKS? VOT A LAUGH! CIGARETTE?

THANKS, ERICSEN

SUDDENLY THE PEACE OF THE VOYAGE WAS SHATTERED . . .
JERRY PLANE ON STARBOARD BOW, SKIPPER!
HOT!

THERE WAS A SUDDEN SCURRY OF ACTIVITY. ERICSEN DASHED OUT OF THE WHEELHOUSE AND THE CREW UNCOVERED THE MACHINE-GUNS WHICH HAD BEEN MOUNTED ON DECK.
IF HE ATTACKS, WE'RE EASY MEAT. DON'T FIRE, LADS—OR IT WILL GIVE THE GAME AWAY!

BUT THERE WAS NO ATTACK. THE GERMAN CIRCLED THE BOAT CURIOUSLY AND THEN SHEERED OFF AND VANISHED INTO THE DISTANCE. THERE WAS A DEEP SIGH OF RELIEF ABOARD THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN*...
HE SAW VE ARE A HARMLESS FISHING BOAT... HO-HO-HO...
OR ELSE HE SAW YOU FLASH A SIGNAL WITH THAT CIGARETTE CASE. IT WOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT!

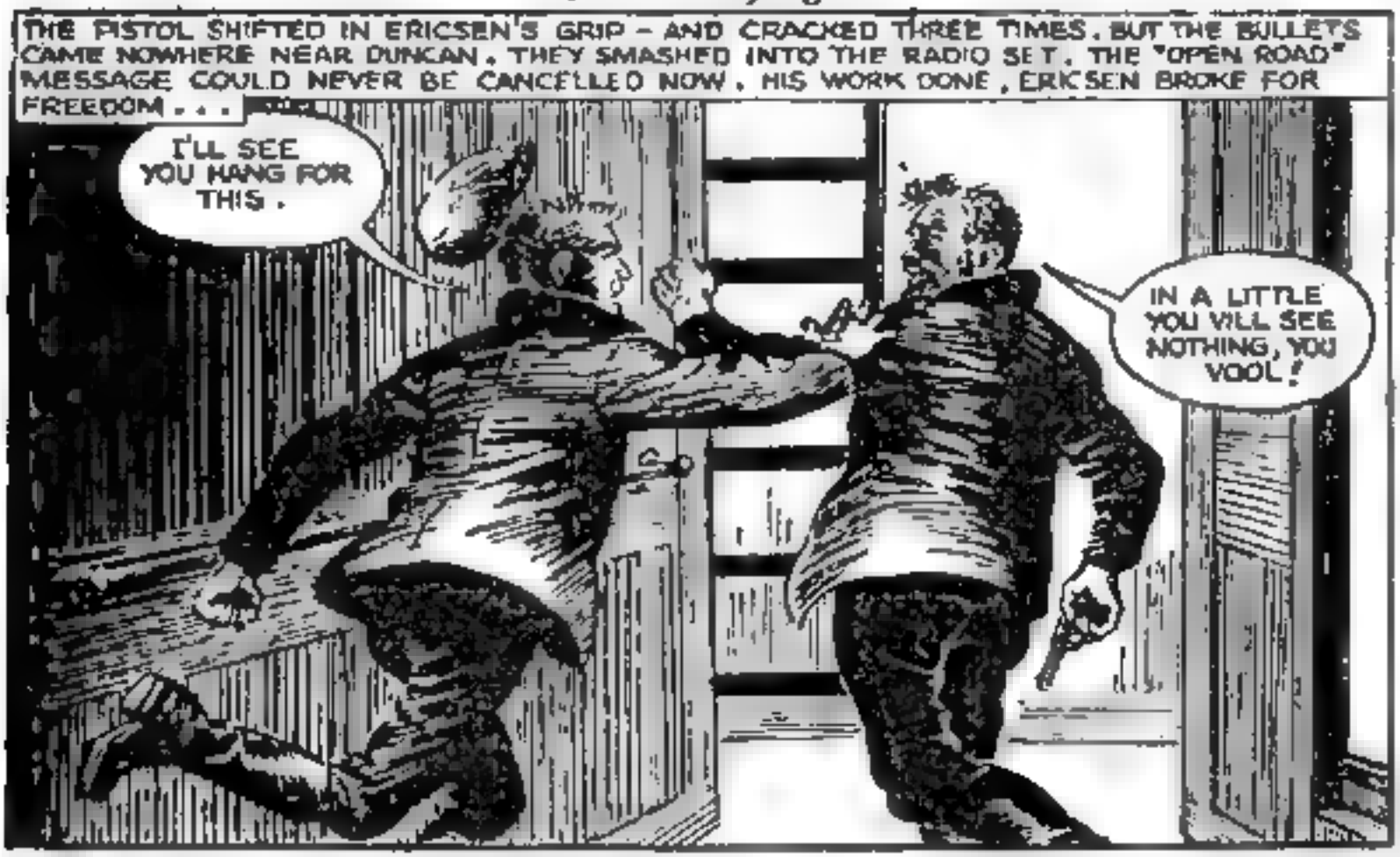
DUNCAN'S SUSPICIONS WERE THOROUGHLY ROUSED AGAIN. TOO MUCH WAS AT STAKE FOR HIM TO TAKE ANY CHANCES. THEY WERE NEARING THEIR DESTINATION — THE TIME OF GREATEST DANGER WAS NEAR.
HAS ERICSEN GONE BELOW? TELL HIM TO COME UP AND START PILOTING!
AND WHERE I CAN KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN TURNED INTO THE NARROW WATERS ON THE LONG TRIMSO FJORD. TENSION ROSE AS THE CHARIOT CREWS WENT BELOW TO DON THEIR DIVING SUITS . . .
KEEP AS WE GO FOR A MINUTE . . .
ALL RIGHT!
NOW WHAT'S HE UP TO?
A SUDDEN CRY FROM THE HOLD MADE DUNCAN FORGET THE NORWEGIAN FOR A MOMENT . . .
SKIPPER! COME QUICK!
THE URGENCY OF THE CALL SENT DUNCAN RACING FOR THE HOLD – THE CHILL FINGERS OF ALARM ALREADY GRIPPING HIM.
LOOK! SHE'S HOLED!
THOSE ARE THE HOLES WHERE THE CHARIOT TOWING BRACKETS WERE – THE CHARIOTS HAVE BEEN LOOSED!
DUNCAN FELT AS IF HE HAD BEEN STRUCK A SICKENING BLOW IN THE STOMACH. HIGHLAND QUEEN'S MISSION HAD FAILED.

IT WAS ERICSEN'S WORK — DUNCAN KNEW THAT INSTANTLY. BUT WHY HAD HE WAITED SO LONG TO SABOTAGE THE TRIP? THE ANSWER CAME FROM THE CABIN WHERE THE RADIO WAS MOUNTED . . .

ERICSEN HAD WAITED UNTIL THIS MOMENT SO THAT HE COULD SEND THE SIGNAL THAT WOULD BRING THE DEFENCELESS CONVOY OUT . . . TO BE AN EASY PREY FOR THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP.

THAT SIGNAL HAD TO BE CANCELLED AT ALL COSTS. DUNCAN SPRANG TO THE OPEN DOORWAY . . .


THE PISTOL SHIFTED IN ERICSEN'S GRIP – AND CRACKED THREE TIMES. BUT THE BULLETS CAME NOWHERE NEAR DUNCAN. THEY SMASHED INTO THE RADIO SET. THE "OPEN ROAD" MESSAGE COULD NEVER BE CANCELLED NOW. HIS WORK DONE, ERICSEN BROKE FOR FREEDOM . . .
I'LL SEE YOU HANG FOR THIS.
IN A LITTLE YOU WILL SEE NOTHING, YOU VOOL!

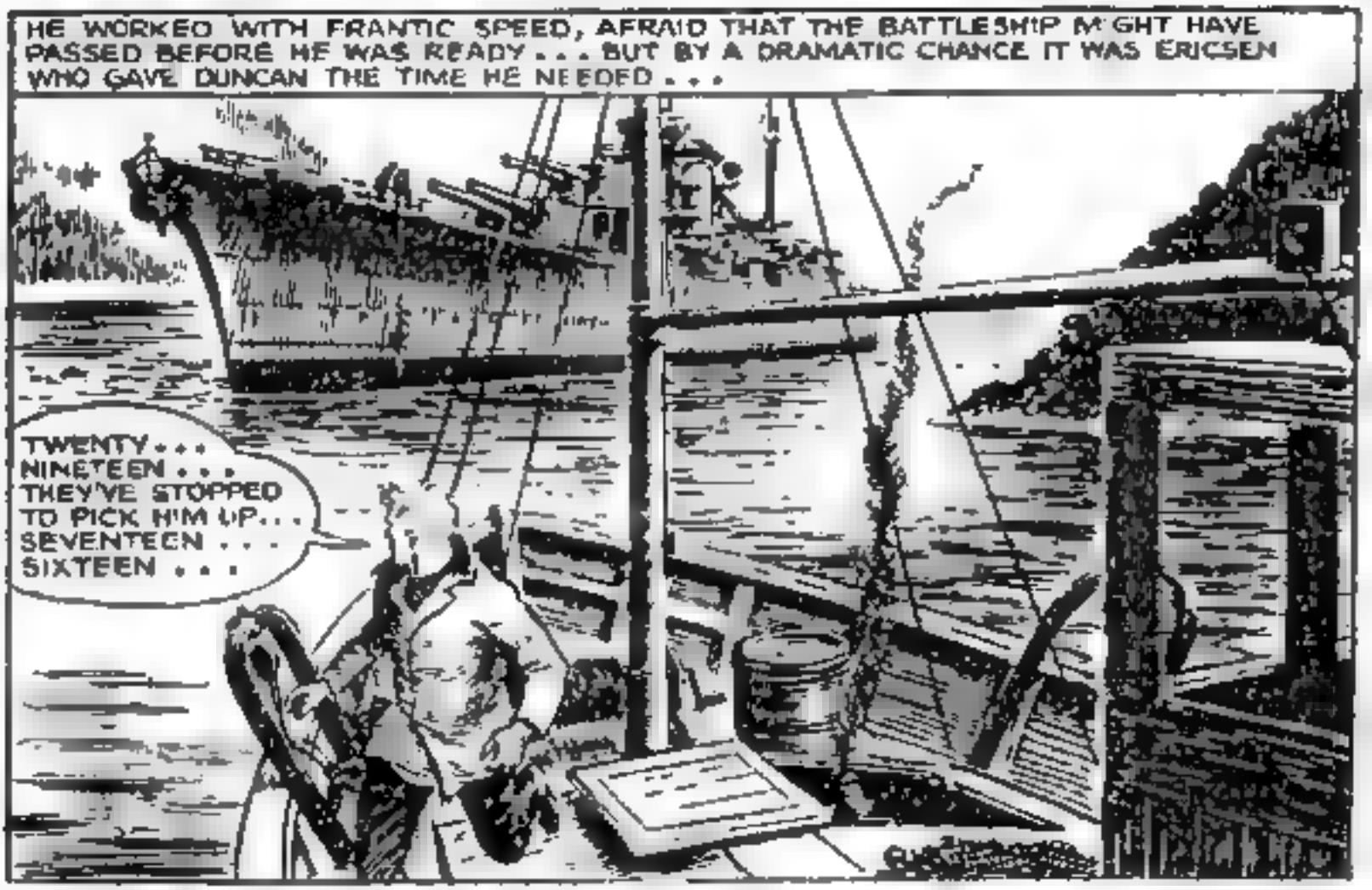
DUNCAN WAS TOO CLOSE FOR THE OTHER TO USE H'S GUN AGAIN. THEY GRAPPLED TOGETHER AND THE YOUNG SCOT SWUNG A SAVAGE PUNCH AT THE SO-CALLED NORWEGIAN.
YOU . . . ROTTEN . . . SPY . . .
ARGH!

ERICSEN DISAPPEARED INTO THE ICY WATER OF THE FJORD — BUT THE CREW OF THE HIGHLAND QUEEN HAD NO MORE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT HIM.
THE MINDENBURG ... SHE'S COMING OUT!
AND NOTHING WE CAN DO TO STOP HER!

IT WAS WITH HEART-RENDING DESPAIR THAT THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN'S* CREW SAW THE GREAT SHIP APPROACH, KNOWING THAT ITS COMING MEANT DEATH AND DESTRUCTION TO THE CONVOY WHICH THE FALSE MESSAGE HAD ALREADY SENT TO SEA.
I KNEW THERE WAS A CHANCE OF LOSING THE *QUEEN* THIS TRIP... BUT TO LOSE HER USELESSLY...
THEN CAME A THOUGHT BORN OF DESPERATION...

THE CHARIOTS WERE GONE BUT NOT THEIR WARHEADS. THEY HAD BEEN STORED INSIDE THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* FOR THE VOYAGE...
INTO THE SMALL BOAT ALL OF YOU. MAKE FOR THE SHORE! NO QUESTIONS!

THERE WAS ALSO DEMOLITION EQUIPMENT STORED IN THE HOLD, READY IN CASE THE *QUEEN* HAD BEEN STOPPED BY GERMAN PATROLS. DUNCAN HASTILY ATTACHED A DETONATOR TO ONE OF THE WARHEADS.
IT'S A HUNDRED TO ONE CHANCE — BUT I'VE GOT TO TAKE IT!


HE WORKED WITH FRANTIC SPEED, AFRAID THAT THE BATTLESHIP MIGHT HAVE PASSED BEFORE HE WAS READY... BUT BY A DRAMATIC CHANCE IT WAS ERICSEN WHO GAVE DUNCAN THE TIME HE NEEDED...
TWENTY...
NINETEEN...
THEY'VE STOPPED TO PICK HIM UP...
SEVENTEEN...
SIXTEEN...

AS THE TWENTY-SECOND FUSE BURNED DOWN IN THE FOREPEAK, DUNCAN OPENED THE THROTTLE WIDE AND SENT THE *HIGHLAND QUEEN* SURGING FORWARD ON HER LAST VOYAGE . . .
TWELVE . . . ELEVEN . . . TEN . . . THAT RAT ERICSEN THINKS IT'S A JOKE, EH?

COLLISION WAS INEVITABLE. BUT ON THE *HINDENBURG*, NO ONE WORRIED. WHAT HARM COULD COME TO THE BATTLESHIP FROM A LITTLE FISHING BOAT DRIVEN BY A CRAZED ENGLANDER?
HEY! WHO IS THE BOAT-BUTCHER NOW, MACLEOD? YOU VILL WRECK YOUR PRECIOUS BOAT!
SIX . . . FIVE . . . FOUR . . .

TWO SECONDS TO GO AND DUNCAN FLUNG HIMSELF OVERBOARD. AS HE SURFACED — BLAST WAVE FROM THE EXPLOSION HIT HIM.
SHE'S GONE... THE QUEEN'S GONE!

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ALSO ON SALE NOW

FOR WAR THRILLS . . . ACTION . . . DRAMA . . .

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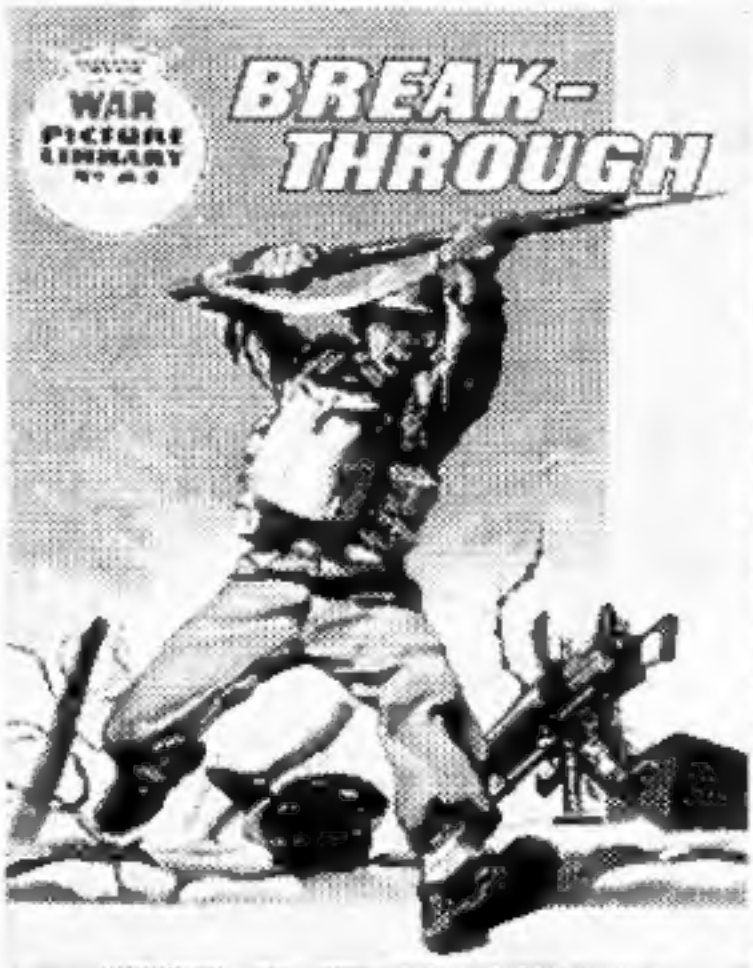

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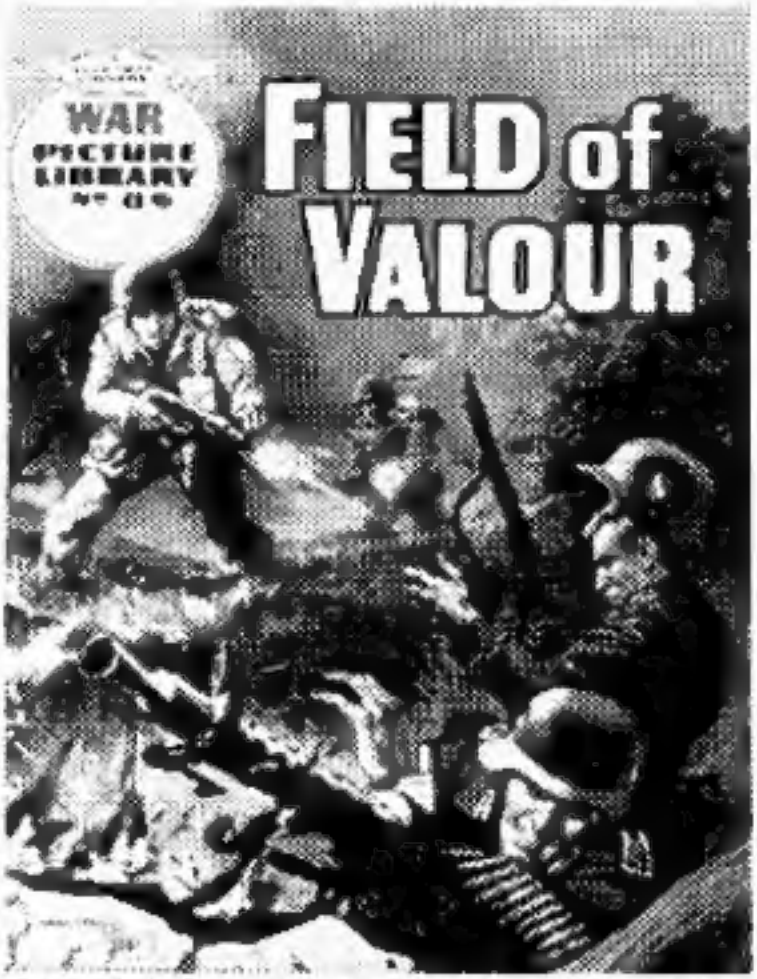

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